

**MEMORANDUM**

November 17, 2011

TO: Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee

FROM: <sup>MM</sup>Marlene Michaelson, Senior Legislative Analyst

SUBJECT: Kensington Sector Plan

This is the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee's first worksession on the revised Kensington Sector Plan (June 2011). This worksession will discuss the overall land use and zoning strategy for the planning area and schools. Specific properties, environmental issues, and design guidelines will be discussed at a future meeting. The Executive's comments on the Plan are attached at © 37 to 63.

**Committee Members should bring a copy of the Sector Plan to the meeting for reference.**

The vision for the Kensington Sector Plan is described on page 1 of the Plan: "to promote a mixed-use Town Center with pedestrian-friendly connections to the vibrant neighborhoods that define Kensington." A new mixed-use vision for the planning area is intended to reinvigorate the Town Center while preserving Kensington's scale and historic character. Key Plan recommendations related to four themes of connectivity, design, the environment, and diversity are also described on page 1.

**BACKGROUND**

**Urban Land Institute Technical Assistance Panel Report**

In 2008, the Town of Kensington sponsored an Urban Land Institute (ULI) Technical Assistance Panel Report to address land use issues in the town. ULI panels convene for one and one half days to provide an intensive but brief review of land use and real estate issues facing public agencies and nonprofit entities. Their report is attached at © 1 to 36.

The panel found Kensington to be a “charming, peaceful, turn-of-the century Victorian community with a diverse population base...home to an attractive and unique business community and some [of] the most beautiful wooded streets and historic homes in the Washington, DC metropolitan area.” They further noted, “As a place to live, work, and visit, Kensington has much to offer in the way of convenience, charm, and history – from its close proximity to Washington, DC, above-average income and education, to its quaint historical appeal, good schools, and an excellent quality of life.”

The ULI report also identified several problems: a large inventory of old buildings and several aging shopping centers, dispersed retail, a lack of dining establishments, difficult and inaccessible pedestrian walkways, a high volume of fast-moving vehicular traffic along principal arteries, indirect and confusing traffic patterns, and too many gas stations. In addition, fragmented ownership and small parcel sizes will make redevelopment a challenge.

The Report identified three main goals for Kensington:

1. “Preserve the unique character of the Town,
2. ‘Take back Connecticut Avenue’ through Kensington such that the town and its citizens receive some of the benefits of this major thoroughfare, instead of only suffering its detriments, and
3. Provide greater residential, retail, dining, and other casual entertainment opportunities for residents, and thereby make Kensington a place where residents and their families have the ability and desire to live throughout all stages of their lives.”

To ensure the continued vitality and success of the community, the panel made a number of recommendations (beginning on © 13). Regarding land use, they recommended changing to mixed-use zoning that would allow for additional smaller scale retail, professional or medical offices, a limited service hotel, and additional multi-family units. The panel recommended capping heights at 65 feet and the floor area ratio (FAR) at 1.5. The panel chair indicated in conversation with Staff that the panel did not have detailed information about the density allowed under existing zoning, nor did it conduct any economic analysis of the viability of the recommended FARs and height in its day and a half review of the Sector Plan. Therefore it is incorrect to conclude, as some who testified did, that their density recommendations were made after significant analysis.

### **Prior Draft of Sector Plan**

The Planning Board submitted a Draft Kensington Sector Plan in October 2009. The Council held a public hearing and the PHED Committee held 3 worksessions and determined that the Commercial Residential (CR) zone, as adopted, would not work in Kensington. The Council directed the Planning Board to consider revisions to the CR zone and to the Kensington Sector Plan and rejected the earlier draft of the Sector Plan. Since the Committee worksessions, the Council has approved changes to the CR zone and the creation of the Commercial/Residential Town (CRT) and Commercial/Residential Neighborhood (CRN) zones. The Planning Board has submitted a revised Sector Plan, which is before the Committee today.

### **Changes to the Sector Plan**

The primary change between the last Planning Board Draft and the revised version is that the Sector Plan no longer recommends CR zoning and instead recommends primarily CRT zoning and a more

limited amount of CRN for those properties recommended for rezoning (see map on page 32 of the Draft). While this Draft Plan recommends changing height or density on a limited number of properties from that recommended in the earlier draft, for most properties it is recommending the same total FAR, commercial and residential FAR, and height. The revised plan makes several changes to reflect the amendments to the CR zones, including the new provision allowing for a shared parking program established by municipal resolution (which was recommended by the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee during its review of the earlier draft of the Kensington Sector Plan). It is also updated to reflect new information available since the earlier draft (e.g., bus rapid transit studies). In addition, the revised Sector Plan recommends designating Kensington Cabin for inclusion in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.<sup>1</sup>

## **Role of Town of Kensington**

Article 28 has unique provisions related to land use planning and zoning impacting the Town of Kensington. It requires a two-thirds vote of the Planning Board to take any action relating to **land use planning** within the City of Takoma Park or the Town of Kensington that is contrary to a resolution of the Mayor and City or Town Council and a two-thirds vote of both the Planning Board and District Council to take any action related to zoning in the City of Takoma Park or the Town of Kensington that is contrary to a resolution of the Mayor and City or Town Council. The Council could approve the Sector Plan with a simple majority but would need a supermajority to take action on zoning (i.e., the Sectional Map Amendment) contrary to Town Council resolutions. In April 2011, the Council received a resolution from the Kensington Town Council supporting the Public Hearing Draft Plan and the heights and densities recommended in that Sector Plan. Therefore, the Council would need six votes to change the recommended heights and densities from that recommended in the Planning Board Draft when approving the Sectional Map Amendment.

## **Testimony**

The Council received a mix of testimony on the Sector Plan. (Site specific testimony will be considered at the next worksession.) Given the strong rhetoric of those who support the Sector Plan and those who oppose it, it is interesting to note how much agreement there is among residents and property owners on several key elements:

- The desire to preserve and protect the existing residential neighborhoods.
- The desire to preserve the charm of Kensington and the small town feel.
- Concern about the amount of traffic on Connecticut Avenue.
- The desire to retain and support the quaint businesses that are unique to Kensington, while not encouraging the proliferation of less unique businesses or businesses perceived to have a potential negative impact on the community.
- The desire to see revitalization of the Town core. (While most of those who opposed the Sector Plan supported revitalization, a few of those who wrote to the Council would prefer the Town Core to remain unchanged.)
- The belief that Kensington should not aim to be another Bethesda or Silver Spring.

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<sup>1</sup> Since the Council approved this designation in March 2011, the Sector Plan language should be updated.

Although there was significant agreement, there was clear disagreement regarding the appropriate maximum heights and FAR, and this issue is addressed further below. Staff notes that many who testified supported revitalization, while also asking the Council to significantly limit height and/or FAR; several suggested limiting the heights to 2 to 3 stories. Given the cost of replacing existing structures, Staff believes that there will not be an incentive for revitalization unless the Sector Plan recommends sufficient density to provide a return on investment that will offset the cost of demolition and reconstruction and the loss of rent from existing tenants. Simply changing the zoning from single use to mixed-use would not accomplish this. Capping heights or densities at or below the currently allowed amount, while at the same time adding the costs of developing under the CRT and CRN zones would, in Staff's view, be a strong disincentive for redevelopment.

When the Council held its hearing on the last draft, it received testimony from 3 commercial property owners, all of whom stated that they did not believe the use of the CR zone in Kensington would create an incentive for redevelopment. Commercial property owners who testified on the revised Sector Plan all supported the new zones, although there were requests for changes in height on specific properties that will be addressed at the next meeting.

Some of the submitted testimony questioned whether there has been adequate notice to the public regarding the Sector Plan and adequate opportunity for public input. With dozens of public meetings, two Planning Board public hearings and two Council public hearings in addition to required noticing and advertising, Staff believes there has been greater notice and opportunity for public input than any other master plan of which Staff is aware. This does not mean that every single resident was notified individually regarding the Sector Plan, a task that is neither legally required nor practical, given the size of the County.

### **Changes in Residential and Commercial Development**

The Draft Sector Plan does not include a table included in all master plans that indicates the current amount of residential and commercial development and jobs to housing ratio, the maximum allowed under the existing master plan, and the amount that would be allowed if the Council approves the Planning Board Draft. Staff has asked Planning Department staff to prepare this table and it will be distributed at the PHED Committee meeting.

### **Heights and Floor Area Ratio**

The Council received testimony questioning the Sector Plan's recommendation for a 75 foot height limit and 2.5 FAR at the core area. Several who testified noted that ULI had recommended a 65 foot height limit and 1.5 maximum FAR in its report. The highest existing building is approximately 65 feet. The maps on pages 21 and 32 of the Plan show the 5 properties recommended for the highest heights and FARs. On page 32, they are identified as Area 1 and they are all located along Connecticut Avenue between Warner Street and Plyers Mill Road. Several of those who testified recommended far lower heights and densities; members of the "Kensington Committee" and "Appropriate Scale for Kensington (ASK)" citizens groups both propose a maximum FAR of 2.0; the Kensington Committee proposes a maximum height of 65 feet.

While Staff recommends that the Committee defer the property-by-property discussions for the next worksession, it is worthwhile to have a general discussion on the appropriate maximum heights and

FARs for the Core of the community. To help the Committee do this, Staff has asked the Planning Department to assemble pictures of properties at heights and FARs similar to those recommended in the Sector Plan. The key question is what densities and heights are sufficient to encourage revitalization, without having a negative impact on the surrounding communities.

## **Schools**

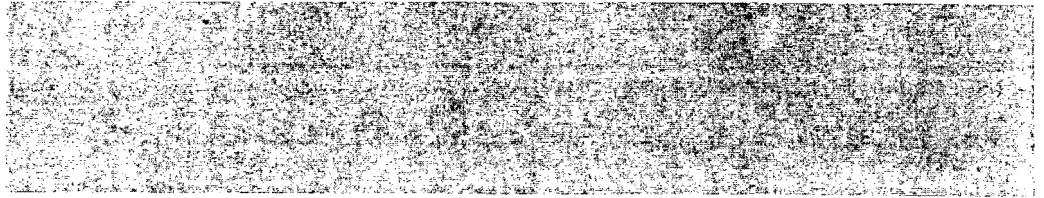
The Council received testimony opposing the Sector Plan based on concerns about having schools become overcrowded. Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) staff worked with Planning Department staff to determine that the Sector Plan's recommendations would not result in the need for a new school. (They estimate that the Sector Plan would generate between 21 and 59 elementary school students (based on an additional 500 to 1,400 multifamily units) at build out based on the potential increase in residents, far less than the amount that would require a new school.)

While Staff understands the concerns of residents, a Sector Plan is a long-term document that cannot predict the timing of development or long-term trends in growth in the number of school age children. Moreover, it is uncertain whether any of the allowed residential development will occur in the short- or long-term. No property owner has discussed any near-term plans for residential development. The role of the Sector Plan is to make sure that sufficient land is available for public facilities, such as schools, if they are needed. The School Board, not the Planning Board, will determine how to address year-to-year fluctuations in the number of students.



**Urban Land  
Institute**

Washington



## **A Technical Assistance Panel Report**

# **Developing a Revitalization Strategy for the Town of Kensington**

Sponsored by:  
Town of Kensington, MD

November 12 - 13, 2008

# Kensington, MD

## Developing a Revitalization Strategy for the Town of Kensington

November 12-13, 2008  
A Technical Assistance Panel Report

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## About ULI Washington

### A District Council of the Urban Land Institute

ULI Washington is a district council of ULI—the Urban Land Institute, a nonprofit education and research organization supported by its members. Founded in 1936, the Institute today has over 40,000 members worldwide representing the entire spectrum of land use planning and real estate development disciplines, working in private enterprise and public service.

As the preeminent, multidisciplinary real estate forum, ULI facilitates the open exchange of ideas, information, and experience among local, national, and international industry leaders and policy makers dedicated to creating better communities.

ULI's mission is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI Washington carries out the ULI mission locally by sharing best practices, building consensus, and advancing solutions through its educational programs and community outreach initiatives.

## About the Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) Program

The objective of ULI Washington's Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) program is to provide expert, multidisciplinary advice on land use and real estate issues facing public agencies and nonprofit organizations in the Washington Metropolitan area. Drawing from its extensive membership base, ULI Washington conducts one and one-half day panels offering objective and responsible advice to local decision makers on a wide variety of land use and real estate issues ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions. The TAP program is intentionally flexible to provide a customized approach to specific land use and real estate issues.

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## Acknowledgments

Both personally and on behalf of ULI Washington, the panel members and project staff would like to thank the town of Kensington for inviting ULI Washington to explore Kensington, and to provide guidance on potential redevelopment opportunities within their community. Specifically, the panel would like to thank the town of Kensington's Mayor, Peter C. Fosselman, for initiating the process and providing guidance and support, including leading the panel on a tour of the community, and the entire town Council: Mary Donatelli, Sean P. McMullen, Sharon Scott, and John Thompson, as well as Maryland State Delegate Alfred C. Carr, Jr., all of whom supported and participated in the process. The panel would also like to thank Sanford W. Daily, the Town Manager, who provided additional useful insights on the tour and throughout, and to Claudia Donnelly, Special Assistant to the Mayor, who served as the direct point of contact between the town and ULI staff, and who was indispensable in coordinating the preparation of briefing materials and all other logistical needs.

The panel also owes its gratitude to Charlie Maier and Kris Warner of Maier & Warner Public Relations, for their preparation of briefing materials, and to Frederick V. Boyd, from the Community-Based Planning Division of the Montgomery County Planning Department, for his involvement and assistance, including his provision of maps for the panel. Special thanks are also due to the following for their roles in preparing for and hosting the panel: Maureen Cappadona, Joseph Cutro, Harley Higgins, Sub-urban Trading Co., and Douglas M. Wrenn. Additionally, the panel would like to thank Café 1894 for hosting a cocktail reception to kick off the panel as well as the panel dinner. Finally, the panel extends its appreciation to the town residents and other stakeholders—some of whom are also mentioned above for their other roles—who participated in the panel's stakeholder input session, roundtable discussions, and panel presentation, including:

### **Stakeholder Participation:**

Charles Atwell, Business Owner

Mackie Barch, Town Resident

David Beaudet, Town Resident and former Town Council Member

Frederick Boyd, Community-Based Planning Division, Montgomery County Planning Department

Neil Burka, Businessman

Alfred Carr, Town Resident, former Town Council Member and current Maryland State District 18 Representative

Sanford Daily, Town Manager

Mary Donatelli, Town Resident and Town Council Member

Peter Fosselman, Mayor

Van Franke, Resident of Kensington and nearby Business Owner

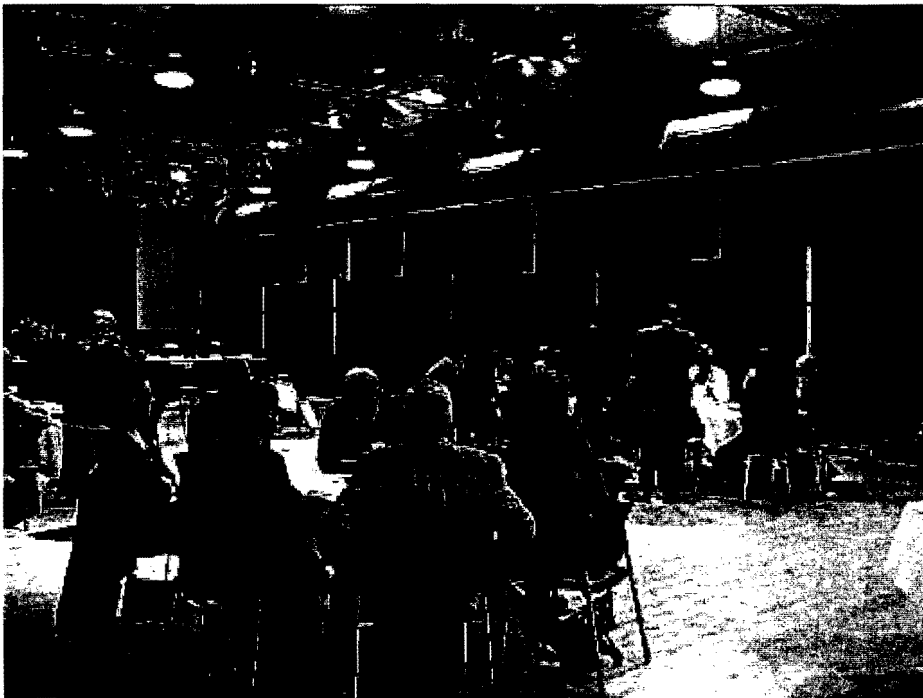
Mark Hudson, Resident and nearby Business Owner

Karen Jackson-Knight, President, Ken-Gar Citizens Association

Dennis McCurdy, President, Kensington Business District Association (KBDA)

Sean McMullen, Resident and Town Council Member  
George Myers, Resident and Town Business Owner  
Julia O'Mally, Resident and President, Kensington Historical Society  
Duane Rollins, Resident, Town Business Owner and President of Kensington Merchants Association  
Deb Sangerholm, Town Business Owner  
Barbara Scharman, Resident  
Sharon Scott, Town Resident and Town Council Member  
John Thompson, Town Resident and Town Council Member  
Denise Willsey, Town Business Manager

The findings and recommendations provided in this report are based on the collective expertise of the panel, along with the briefing materials, and information gleaned from the tour, stakeholder presentations, and roundtable discussions conducted during the panel's one and one-half day effort. ULI Washington hopes that the following information will help guide the town of Kensington as it seeks to connect, enhance, and add to its many existing assets, so that many more residents of the region will have the same opportunity as the panel did, to "Explore Kensington."



*Panelists and town stakeholders participate in roundtable discussion groups at the outset of the process.*

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## Foreword: Overview and Panel Assignment

The town of Kensington is located in Montgomery County, Maryland – just two miles north of the Capital Beltway and five miles from the northern border of the city of Washington, DC. A charming, peaceful, turn-of-the-century Victorian community with a diverse population base, Kensington is also home to an attractive and unique business community and some of the most beautiful wooded streets and historic homes in the Washington, DC metropolitan area.

Kensington traces its architectural history back to 1890, when Washington, DC developer Brainard Warner designed and built a planned Victorian community, featuring a church, a library, and a local newspaper. Mr. Warner had fallen in love with the city of Kensington on a trip to England, and devised a plan to replicate that same charm back in his home country.

The area that is referred to as Kensington has a population of nearly 20,000 and features a robust business community, numerous antiques and art galleries – highlighted by two regionally renowned shopping areas, 'Antique Row' and the West Howard Antique District. A third shopping and commercial artery is Metropolitan Avenue, located on the north side of town, with an equal share of retail and restaurants, with some underused/dilapidated lots, a concrete plant, and warehouses. The town proper, however, measures just one-half a square mile in size and has 1,873 residents, as of the 2000 U.S. Census, and is transected by Connecticut Avenue, University Boulevard West, and Knowles Avenue; it is equidistant from two Metrorail Red Line stations, Wheaton and Grosvenor-Strathmore, and centers around the historic MARC commuter rail.

Kensington's business community is composed of more than 300 businesses, and includes a recently-redeveloped Safeway grocery store, multiple antique shops and art galleries, a few restaurants, two performing arts theaters, dry cleaners, a fitness center, auto repair shops, a hardware store, bookstores, and the historic and popular Noyes Library for Young People. The town also hosts regular events for its residents and visitors, including a weekly Farmer's Market, an annual 8k Race, Earth Arbor Day Festival, Labor Day Parade and Festival, and a holiday lighting event, among others. Tens of thousands of visitors come to the town each year, drawn to its world-class antiques and new home design businesses, as well as to visit its well-known and historic 'Antique Row.'

As a place to live, work, and visit, Kensington has much to offer in the way of convenience, charm, and history – from its close proximity to Washington, DC, above-average income and education, to its quaint historical appeal, good schools, and an excellent quality of life.

While much of the Victorian charm and small-town roots of Kensington are still in evidence today – making much of it a historically preserved zone – it has experienced natural population growth, increased commerce, and higher volumes of traffic than what its roads were initially designed to handle. Kensington is also home to a large inventory of old buildings and several aging shopping centers, a lack of dining establishments, difficult and inaccessible pedestrian walkways, and a lack of directional signage for the town. In fact, the only major change in the town's layout occurred in 1937, with the construction of a bridge over the original rail crossing, and the extension and widening of Connecticut Avenue, the town's main thoroughfare, in 1957.

An out-of-date Sector Plan – last updated and approved in 1978, which makes it the oldest Sector Plan in Montgomery County—does not address many of these challenges.

For the past two years, the civic leaders of Kensington, led by Mayor Peter Fosselman, have been undertaking efforts to revitalize the town. These efforts include initiating a new marketing and branding plan, beginning the process with Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) of updating the outdated Sector Plan, and successfully lobbying for new state laws (quasi-zoning authority and liquor service). The goal of the town is to develop an overarching revitalization strategy to create a vibrant, mixed-use community for residents and visitors, and to improve its zoning strategies and processes to attract new businesses and revenue. This panel continues that effort.

### **Key Issues and Challenges**

As part of the town's revitalization efforts, challenges were identified that, if appropriately addressed, could revitalize the town and enhance its charm for residents, businesses, and visitors alike. The town has identified these core issues as: a high volume of fast-moving vehicular traffic along principal arteries, poor pedestrian walkways and access, indirect and confusing traffic patterns, too many gas stations, older and tired shopping centers, too few restaurants, and less-unique specialty retail establishments.

Kensington's main thoroughfare, Connecticut Avenue, is often referred to as 'gasoline alley.' According to the State Highway Administration, various sections of Connecticut Avenue, within Kensington, carry between 43,000-55,000 vehicles/day. The intersection at Plyers Mill Road and Connecticut Avenue is a chokepoint for vehicles, and a high speed limit on Connecticut Avenue makes the road dangerous for both pedestrians and drivers. Further, Connecticut Avenue and the CSX Rail Line act as a barrier for pedestrians, with few linkages from one side of the tracks to the other. For example, pedestrians have difficulty walking from 'Antique Row' to the West Howard Antiques District, without taking a long and hazardous path across many lanes of traffic on Connecticut Avenue. Sidewalks throughout the town are narrow, too close to the road, and often non-contiguous.

The pending Amendment to Kensington's 1978 Sector Plan will assist the town's efforts to evaluate current antiquated land use policies and zoning issues and create an opportunity to provide greater incentives and more flexibility to welcome new businesses and tenants, and in turn drive new visitors and commerce. Kensington currently has no mixed-use zones and no methodology or process in place to approve buildings combining ground-level retail with office space and/or residential units.

There are several significant issues that the town wishes to overcome with a comprehensive and strategic revitalization strategy. They are:

Dispersed Retail. Kensington's 'city center' features critical physical and logistical challenges, highlighted by three high-traffic, high-volume intersections: Connecticut and Knowles Avenues, Connecticut and Plyers Mill Avenues, and Connecticut and University Avenues. These intersections are difficult and dangerous for pedestrian crossings, with high volumes of traffic and roads that are six and seven lanes wide in places. Retail spaces on Kensington's roads are widely dispersed and non-centralized, inviting access by car rather than easy pedestrian access. There are also very few restaurants in Kensington, with just a handful of newer establishments featuring fine cuisine – making Kensington less of a 'destination' for outside visitors and residents alike. Finally, anchor tenants in most of Kensington's shopping centers are not necessarily 'destination' tenants – many 'chain' and less unique businesses are the norm.

Traffic. With a traffic count of 73,000 cars a day traveling through the town of Kensington – and with its primary shopping attractions and Victorian neighborhood charm hidden by aging storefronts and gas stations, the town has become less of a destination and more of a pass-through community, hindering opportunities for commerce and revenue.

Zoning Disincentives. The current existing zones within the town are for the most part single-use zones and include: R10 (residential multi-family), R60 (residential single-family) and C1, C2 (commercial); CT (commercial transition); CO, OM (office); and I1 (industrial). These limited zoning options and lack of a mixed-use zoning category clearly serve as a disincentive to the creative use of property by both current and potential real estate owners and developers. The current county special exception process is also lengthy and does not provide the real estate community with sufficient certainty.

Older, Existing Buildings and Shopping Centers. Many commercial buildings in Kensington were built at the turn of or during the middle of the last century, without loading docks parking spaces or Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility. Improvement to these older buildings will require expensive build-outs to accommodate modern retail specifications and meet current building/fire codes.

Poor Signage and Town Branding. Streetscape signage, directional signage and Town 'branding' are inconsistent and confusing, or altogether non-existent.

### **Questions to be Addressed by the Panel**

In context of the challenges outlined above, Kensington's civic leaders have identified the following sets of questions for consideration by the ULI Washington panel in an effort to ultimately develop a vibrant, mixed-use community for residents and visitors.

### **Market Potential**

- What is the market potential for downtown Kensington for strong retail names, financially-capable retailers and restaurateurs?
- What uses can be supported within the town and which of those uses will prove catalytic to development?

### **Development Strategies**

- Given the various opportunity sites along Connecticut and Metropolitan Avenues, where should the town focus its revitalization efforts?
- The town currently has a state of the art (bio retention, transit oriented) parking lot planned along Metropolitan Avenue adjacent to the MARC train station. How can the lot support future development and how should the town allocate usage fees?

### **Planning and Design**

- Connecticut Avenue and the CSX Rail line act as barriers, providing few linkages from one side to another, and making it difficult for pedestrians to cross. What can be done to improve connectivity?
- The intersection at Plyers Mill Road and Connecticut Avenue is currently a choke point for vehicles. What can be done to alleviate this?
- Vehicular speed along Connecticut Avenue makes the road dangerous. What traffic calming measures and other improvements to improve walkability can be put in place along the corridor?
- What streetscape improvements should be incorporated in the revitalization strategy to show the town's commitment towards revitalization?
- What can be done about the excessive quantity and location of Kensington's gas stations?

- Would a form-based code for these sites be an appropriate vehicle for achieving quality urban design?

### **Implementation**

- What zoning changes need to be made in order to implement the panel's recommendations?
- What incentives can be put in place to encourage development of the private sector?
- What tools and sources can the town take advantage of to fund aspects of the revitalization?

## Executive Summary: The Panel's Recommendations

Although the panel's insights and recommendations are all largely directed towards the long term, the panel is pleased to be able to provide its thoughts in advance of the Sector Plan Amendment for Kensington and the area surrounding it. It is the panel's hope that it can provide the town's citizens and officials with a market-based "outsider's perspective"—albeit one informed by both presentations and numerous one-on-one discussions with town residents, elected officials, and stakeholders—of the types of redevelopment that may be fostered by the new Sector Plan, in order to attract new businesses and revenue, and to create a vibrant, mixed-use community for residents and visitors. Moreover, the panel has attempted to demonstrate which sites present the best opportunities for such redevelopment, in order to allow the community to focus its efforts on achievable goals.

### Market Potential

The panel concluded that there are already many strong elements in place within the town of Kensington. There are also, however, several challenges, including the lack of a critical mass of business and economic elements, and of connectivity among assets, which would create the cohesive whole desired by the residents. The panel did find the existence of unmet market demand, by both residents and commuters, with the following market potential:

- 50,000-75,000 square feet of smaller scale retail;
- 60,000-80,000 square feet of professional or medical office;
- Small (100-125 room) limited service hotel; and,
- 1,600 additional multi-family units.

Note: This figure assumes the current and projected population, and that the town, over a long-term period (e.g., twenty years) will gradually transition from a 97/3 ratio of single-family residential to multi-family residential, to an 80/20 ratio.

### Development Strategies

To this end, the panel sought to identify those sites that offer the best opportunities for redevelopment to satisfy this unmet market demand, developed in a mixed-use manner whenever possible. By focusing initially on identifying the best opportunities for redevelopment, the panel sought to assist the town and its partners in deciding where they could most effectively allocate resources for streetscape and other design improvements that could facilitate such development, and also focus on where other incentives and regulatory changes should be targeted.

In order to fulfill the market potential detailed above, and do so with a mix of uses and in a manner that provides a connected, walkable, lively, and coherent Kensington identity and experience, the panel focused on three separate sites. The panel did not attempt to dictate the uses for the sites, given the difficulty in predicting market conditions at the time of redevelopment. Moreover, the panel recognized that in many instances other uses currently exist on these sites, and that they may continue to do so for quite some time. Thus, the panel's recommendations reflect a long-term vision.

Given these caveats, the panel attempted to identify the sites (or collection of sites) that had the location, visibility, block depth, orientation, and uniformity of ownership that will present the best opportunities for redevelopment when dictated by market demand and real estate development economics. Weighing these factors, the panel determined that the best opportunities are provided by the sites currently occupied by Hardware City Shopping Center on the western side of Connecticut Avenue; the Konterra Cement Plant and Mizzell Lumber tracts on Metropolitan Avenue; and the fire station and surrounding parcels on Connecticut Avenue at Plyers Mill Road. The panel developed block studies for each of these sites, demonstrating possible configurations.

## **Planning and Design**

The greatest opportunities as well as the greatest challenges for the town of Kensington are presented by its street network, which carries a large number of commuters through the town. The network provides accessibility to both commuters and residents, but is also somewhat confusing to navigate, frequently overcrowded, and places primacy on automobiles and their users—particularly commuters—rather than pedestrians, and/or town residents. The panel recommended an integrated approach of infrastructure improvements and redevelopment along the town's main thoroughfare, Connecticut Avenue, and, just as importantly, along its secondary and tertiary streets.

The "branding" of a community is physically manifested in its streetscapes and built environment. As such, the panel called for both streetscape improvements and for creating opportunities for the types of development that provide residences, lodging, offices, retail, and entertainment venues, which add to the streetscape through their built form and through the residents, patrons, and visitors that will use those streetscapes and activate them. This complementary approach, however, leads one to the inevitable question: Which comes first? The streetscape improvements, or the new development? It is the panel's position that the improvements must come first, in order to create the environment that will more likely attract private investment. To that end, the panel made a number of detailed short- and long-term recommendations regarding potential improvements to Connecticut Avenue, as well as to secondary and tertiary streets within the town.

## Implementation

The panel noted that Kensington's current environment is reflective of several factors, including:

- The 1978 Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan;
- The current zoning categories on the parcels;
- Small parcel sizes;
- Fragmented Ownership; and,
- Low-Density Commercial Uses;

Thus, at the outset of the new Sector Plan process, the panel recommends that the town seek far more flexible zoning standards, which would allow for the following types of development, particularly on the opportunity sites discussed in this report:

- Mixed-Use zones with ground floor retail- office and/or residential above;
- A wide range of retail uses permitted;
- Minimum lot size to encourage assemblage;
- Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 1.0 to 1.5 (Hardware City Shopping Center at 1.5; Metropolitan Avenue at 1.0; Fire Station at 1.0);
- Maximum Height 65 feet allowed;
- Build-to Line to define street edge;
- Eliminate gas stations as special exception uses;
- Create a street and block plan that allows for proper dimensions for development;
- Create a parking strategy for the redevelopment area, with flexible parking standards; and
- Define the limits of the town's core.

## Market Potential

Although the panel's charge was to assist with developing a revitalization strategy for the town of Kensington, it first spent a considerable amount of time taking note of the town's many assets, and cataloguing which aspects are already quite vital. Through this process, the panel concluded that there are already many strong elements in place, with the main challenge being the lack of a critical mass, and connectivity among assets, which would create the cohesive whole desired by the residents. In order to provide this connectivity, however, and in effect, close the circuit, the town must capitalize on several opportunities to create new nodes of activity, as those which currently exist are too dispersed and do not create a sufficient identity and "pull."

The creation of such a clear and vibrant physical identity and "pull" from the outside—specifically, among commuters on Connecticut Avenue—is essential in order to accomplish the following three main goals of the community, as heard by the panelists during their interactions with the town's citizens and stakeholders: a) preserve the unique character of the town; b) "take back Connecticut Avenue" through Kensington, such that the town and its citizens receive some of the benefits of this major thoroughfare, instead of only suffering its detriments; and c) provide greater residential, retail, dining, and other casual entertainment opportunities for residents, and thereby make Kensington a place where residents and their families have the ability and desire to live throughout all the stages of their lives. Fortunately, these three goals are actually quite complementary, as shall be laid out in this report.



*Panelists, Elected Officials, and other stakeholders tour the Town of Kensington, including its historic Antique Row, pictured here.*

### **Preserving—while at the same time capitalizing upon—the unique character of the town**

First and foremost among the town's many strengths is its unique and historic character. While many places in our nation have been accused of looking the same, Kensington has the advantage of distinctive neighborhoods with good housing stock, and a historic and appealing commercial district. People crave such authenticity of experience and want to live and raise families,

shop, dine, and recreate in places that are unique, special, and provide opportunities for community interaction, and thus such places should be preserved and promoted whenever possible. The boom in town centers and other mixed-use projects is

attributable in part to the recognition of this demand by the market; however, even the best new mixed-use projects and town centers suffer somewhat initially from their newness, as true character is something that must develop organically over time.

The current demographics of the town of Kensington provide yet another strength, with a median household income of \$96,016, well above the median for Montgomery County; educational attainment levels that are higher than the county average; and a very high level of home-ownership (87%). Kensington households are also relatively slower to turn over, with area residents having lived in their current homes for a median of nine years. This high degree of both home-ownership and stability no doubt contributes to the sense of community, civic pride, and civic involvement witnessed by the panel during their visit, which is another notable asset.

And yet, as we have seen in too many instances, historic assets and a stable, prosperous, and engaged community at one point in time do not, on their own, ensure continued vitality and success of a community. Even the best communities are not crystallized in amber: households age, demographics change, and other communities aggressively compete for public resources, residents, jobs, and economic development. Those communities who do not have an eye towards the future as well as on the past do so at their peril.

This is not to say, however, that the panel believed a radical makeover of the town, or a large influx of new residents and growth, is necessary or even desirable. Given the town's location—in between, but not immediately accessible to—two Metrorail stations, the town of Kensington is not slated for, nor is it an appropriate location for, the level of redevelopment or intensity of uses that is found in Wheaton and White Flint, as those two communities are built around Metrorail stations, which are greater drivers of density than MARC commuter rail stations.

The panel did think, however, that better use could be made of the MARC station and the mobility options it provides, as noted later in the report. Thus, the panel sought to provide recommendations that would allow the town to increase its benefit from both its own demographic strength and from that of the many commuters passing by the community, in order to make the citizens of the town of Kensington net beneficiaries of the mobility opportunities they provide to the region's commuters, instead of merely experiencing their negative externalities.

**"Taking back Connecticut Avenue" through Kensington, such that the town and its citizens receive some of the benefits of this major thoroughfare**



*The panel's tour included a crossing of the railroad tracks at Connecticut Avenue, giving the panel an "up close and personal" look at the thoroughfare.*



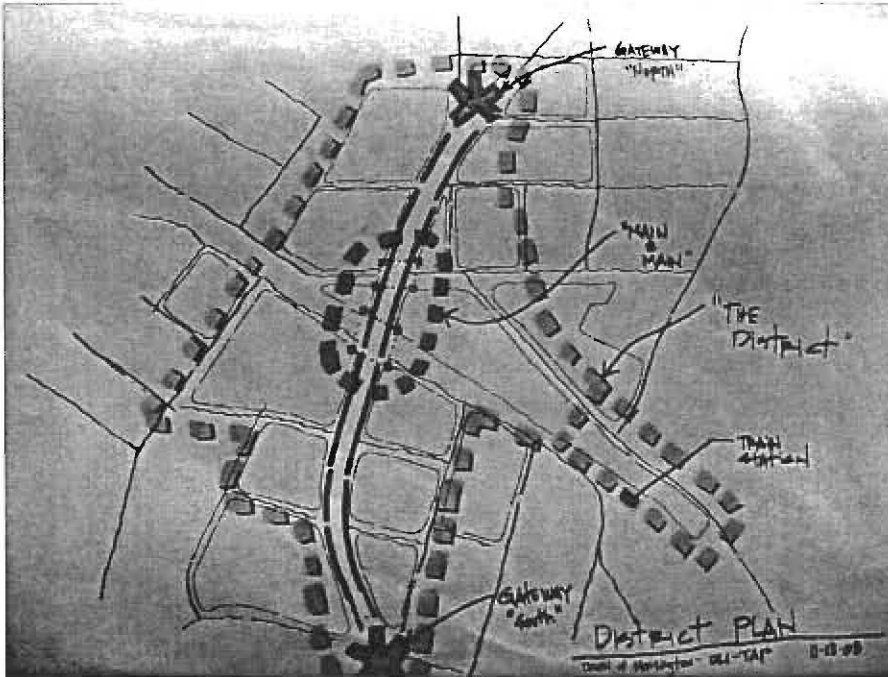
*The Panel tours one of several gas stations along Connecticut Avenue (another is in the background)*

With the highest traffic counts of all of Kensington's thoroughfares, Connecticut Avenue is where retail would most naturally want to be located, in order to take advantage of the visibility afforded there. There is a conflict, however, between the type of retail uses that serve pass-through commuters and those that serve local residents and pedestrians. At present, the primary uses, specifically the gas stations, are situated to serve pass-through traffic.

Unfortunately, there is not an easy solution, in the near-term at least, to the abundance of gas stations currently located there, or to the amount of traffic that passes through. The panel attempted to take the long-term and pragmatic view, recognizing that the State of Maryland will continue to need Connecticut Avenue to serve as a major thoroughfare, and that the many gas stations will likely remain in place until the land value becomes such that the market will force a major shift in land use.

Important streetscape improvements can and need to

be made, as detailed in the section on Planning and Design. Such improvements are not enough on their own, though, to change the experience and perception of Kensington, for residents, for those passing through, and/or those who would be potential investors in Kensington. As the panel described it, the town of Kensington must, at its front door of Connecticut Avenue, offer people a sense upon entering the town that "something different is happening here," thus prompting them to slow down, take note, and explore the community. In essence, the goal is to create a District with a "Main & Main" at its center.



Accomplishing this task is essential to both capturing some of the buying power of the commuters and to enhancing the quality of life for those who currently live and work—and would seek to live and work—in a place like Kensington. Such an undertaking is one for the long-term; it requires a sustained commitment to a vision for the future,

enabled and encouraged by an improved regulatory scheme, as laid out in the following sections.

**Providing opportunities for greater residential, retail, dining, and other casual entertainment options for residents, and thereby making Kensington a place where residents and their families can and want to live throughout all the stages of their lives**

As noted above, the demographics of the town of Kensington are strong, and traffic counts on Connecticut Avenue alone are very high: according to the State Highway Administration, various sections of Connecticut Avenue, within Kensington, carry between 43,000-55,000 vehicles/day. By way of comparison:

- Rockville Pike north of Strathmore carries 54,900 vehicles;
- Georgia Avenue in Silver Spring carries 43,000 vehicles;
- Wisconsin Avenue in Bethesda carries less than 40,000 vehicles; and,
- Connecticut Avenue in DC, where it is six lanes wide, carries between 26,000-39,000 vehicles.

Fifty-five thousand vehicles/day is equivalent to one quarter of the traffic on the Beltway, so it presents a special challenge, but also an opportunity, if some of those commuters can be enticed to pause and consider Kensington as a destination for retail, dining, and entertainment.

Unfortunately, as currently constituted, few people passing by on Connecticut Avenue would know about the many charming and unique aspects of Kensington, or have

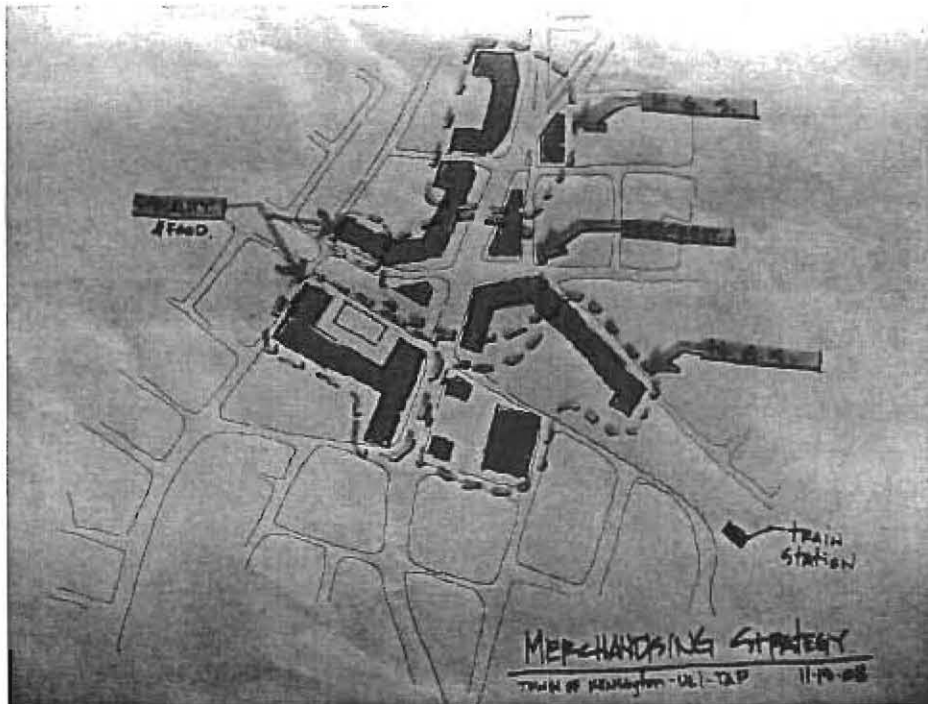
reason to investigate further, as the current street design and land use does not provide any clues about the character and function of the neighborhoods that are merely steps off Connecticut Avenue, and therefore does not draw them in. Rather, their only interaction with the town is likely pulling in for a tank of gas at one of the many stations lining Connecticut Avenue, or perhaps visiting Antique Row on Howard Avenue, or the specialty stores on Metropolitan Avenue. However, these attractions are not enough to make Kensington a "regular" destination, without more restaurants, complementary retail, or entertainment options.

Moreover, community stakeholders interviewed by the panel expressed a desire for more retail, restaurant, and entertainment options within the town of Kensington, so that they could walk and patronize such establishments within their own community, instead of having to frequently drive elsewhere. One stakeholder noted that providing such options is crucial in order to convince those who grow up in Kensington to continue living there as young adults. In much the same vein, Kensington's current residential options, with its overwhelming percentage (97%) of single-family residential stock, also discourages a range of household types from remaining in the community, including both young and older residents who may not want or be able to afford a single-family home. The ends of the demographic barbell—young and old—are more likely to gravitate towards multi-family residential environments, which require less maintenance and provide an opportunity to rent or buy at lower costs.

Given the existence in the town of Kensington of unmet market demand, by both residents and commuters, the panel estimated the following existing market potential:

- 50,000-75,000 square feet of smaller scale retail;
- 60,000-80,000 square feet of professional office;
- Small (100-125 room) limited service hotel; and,
- 1,600 additional multi-family units.

Note: This figure assumes the current and projected population, and that the town, over a long-term period (e.g., twenty years) will gradually transition from a 97/3 ratio of single-family residential to multi-family residential, to an 80/20 ratio.



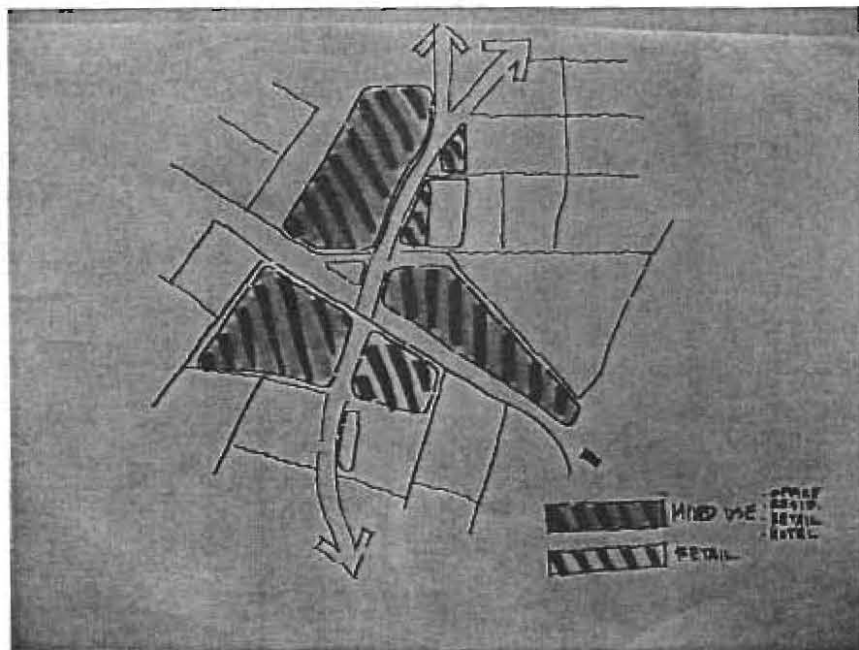
The illustration to the left paints, in broad strokes, how this new retail could be distributed throughout the town. The integration of such additional development – carefully planned, located, and executed – could both provide some of the missing community ingredients cited by residents. With additional

residential options, new mixed-use development could provide opportunities for residents of Kensington to "age in place," enabling them to find a suitable place to live in the community throughout their lives. Similarly, providing such additional entertainment, office, residential, and hospitality options can, if properly sited and combined, add pedestrian activity and liveliness to the streetscape.

Adding such liveliness and activity to the streetscape is essential; although commendable efforts have been made with planters and benches on Howard Avenue, and with signage and brick pavers on Metropolitan Avenue, Connecticut Avenue is the gateway to Kensington and for the vast majority of those in the region, Connecticut Avenue is all that they may ever know about the town. Altering the current dynamic on Connecticut Avenue is a Planning and Design issue that is treated in detail later in this report, but it is also an important Market Potential issue, as steps must be taken to change the street from a net detriment to a net benefit for the community.

To that end, the panel sought to identify those sites that offer the best opportunities for redevelopment, for retail, multi-family residential, professional office, and a limited-service hotel, developed in a mixed-use manner whenever possible. By focusing initially on identifying the best opportunities for redevelopment, the panel sought to assist the town and its partners in deciding where they could most effectively allocate resources for streetscape and other design improvements that could facilitate such development, and also focus on where other incentives and regulatory changes should be targeted.

## Development Strategies



*Illustration 1: Redevelopment Opportunity Sites*

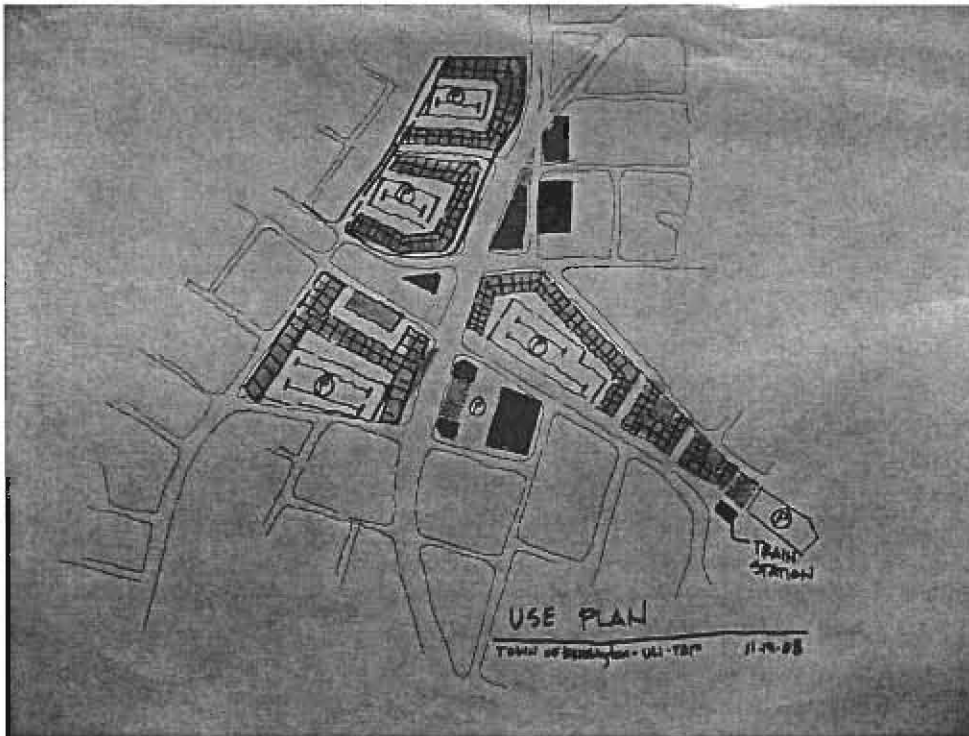
In order to fulfill the market potential detailed above, and do so with a mix of uses and in a manner that provides a connected, walkable, lively, and coherent Kensington identity and experience, the panel focused on three separate sites, as shown below: the sites currently occupied by Hardware City Shopping Center on the western side of Connecticut Avenue; the Konterra Cement Plant and Mizzell Lumber tracts on

Metropolitan Avenue; and the Fire Station and surrounding parcels on Connecticut Avenue and Plyers Mill Road. The panel did not attempt to dictate the uses for the sites, given the difficulty in predicting market conditions. Moreover, the panel recognized that in many instances other uses currently exist on these sites, and that they may continue to do so for quite some time. Thus, the panel's recommendations reflecting a long-term vision. Given these caveats, the panel attempted to designate which physical areas had the location, visibility, block depth and orientation, and uniformity of ownership such that when that time comes and the land bases become more valuable, they will present the best opportunities for redevelopment.

Regarding the land currently occupied by several gas stations on the eastern side of Connecticut Avenue, the panel felt that opportunities for different types of retail establishments, including restaurants, would be realized only once the land bases for these sites justified such redevelopment. The panel noted that many neighborhood-serving establishments would seek to be located near the Safeway, using it as an anchor, and commended the town for working with Safeway to achieve what is actually a very good store prototype, given the design limitations on grocery stores and their need to limit glass exteriors as much as possible.

Because the other three sites mentioned above provide more readily available, larger-scale land assemblage opportunities, the panel focused on them in greater detail.

Illustration 1 (previous) and Illustration 2 (below) present the future development scenarios on a broad scale; more detailed possibilities for each site are presented in turn.



*Illustration 2: Redevelopment Opportunity Sites Use Plan*

**Site 1: Site currently occupied by the Hardware City Shopping Center on the western side of Connecticut Avenue**

Most commercially-zoned properties in Kensington are small parcels, with separate owners. However, in order for a developer to redevelop on even a modest scale, he or she will need to be able to assemble enough land to have a critical mass to create a marketable product. The Hardware City Shopping Center site, which has great visibility, has the advantage of uniformity of ownership, leading the panel to focus on this site early-on as a potential "game-changer" for mixed-use redevelopment.

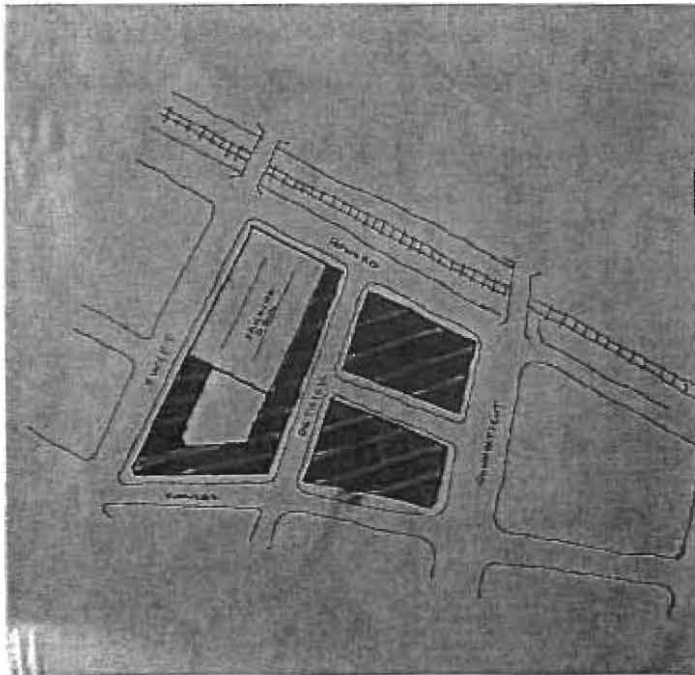


Illustration 3: Hardware City Shopping Center Block Study- Scenario 1

Such redevelopment would create an entrance to the town which, in conjunction with the streetscape improvements detailed in the Planning & Design section, would provide a counterbalance to the gas stations currently existing on the east side of Connecticut Avenue. Illustrations 3 and 4 depict two potential development scenarios. In Illustration 3, potential is created by splitting the existing block into two, with a series of internal streets that are both vehicular and pedestrian and a back lot that is anchored with residential over retail with a parking structure.

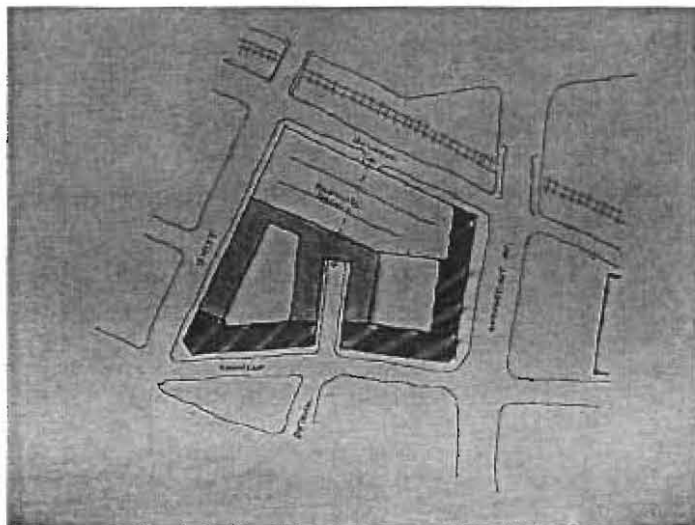
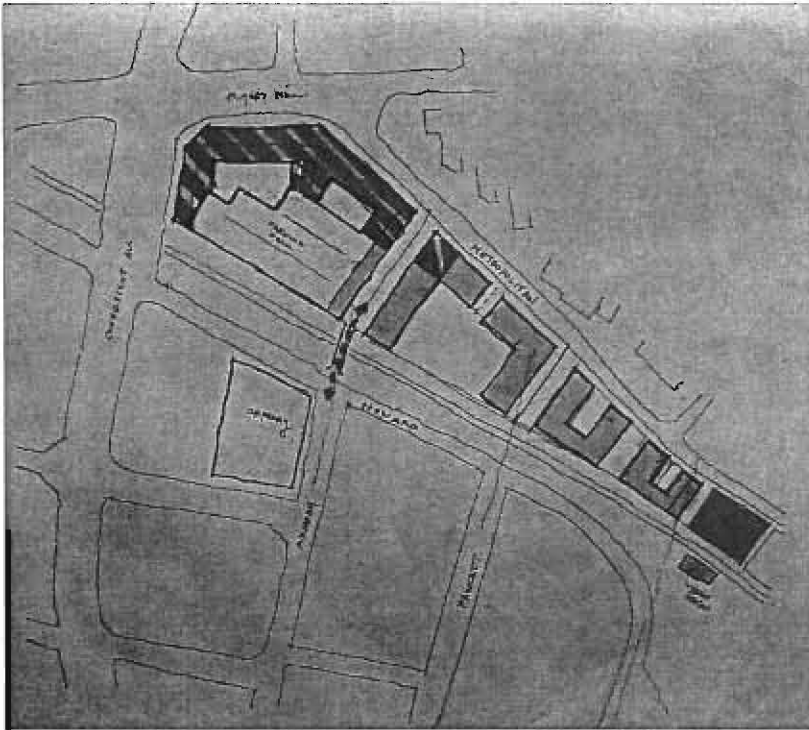


Illustration 4: Hardware City Shopping Center Block Study- Scenario 2

In Illustration 4, Dietrick Avenue terminates before intersecting with Howard. Retail lines Knowles Avenue and Connecticut Avenue and residential uses are provided on top. In both scenarios, a key issue is having enough land area to create the needed parking. Given current county parking ratio requirements, one of the problems encountered in trying to create the "feel" of a small downtown and bringing shops to the street is the need to accommodate parking in a vertical manner, which requires larger land parcels and increases

project costs. Further discussion regarding the possibilities created by closing several smaller streets within the town—and the opportunities such closures would create for more developable land area—can be found in the Planning & Design Section of the Report.

## Site 2: Konterra Cement Plant and Mizzell Lumber tracts on Metropolitan Avenue



*Illustration 5: Block study of Konterra Cement Plant and Mizzell Lumber Tracts on Metropolitan Avenue*

As mentioned in the Market Potential section, the panel viewed the MARC station as a strong building block for the town, and thus focused on it and the land adjoining it as a prime redevelopment opportunity. Although the town of Kensington is between two Metrorail stations and thus not directly accessible via Metrorail, it is nonetheless located directly on a MARC line, with six stops in the morning and six stops in the afternoon, providing service to Union Station in Washington, DC in 25 minutes.

This convenient access to downtown could serve as a selling point for multi-family residential, and the panel envisioned a series of 3- to 4- story buildings, or buildings with 4 stories over 1 story of parking, with the building becoming progressively larger in scale as the block depths increase. Although the panel discussed retail possibilities focused around the train station, the consensus was that there would simply not be enough people in the immediate vicinity to support more than perhaps one coffee purveyor, with retail seeking the higher-visibility sites adjacent to the main thoroughfares. As discussed further in the Planning & Design section, the panel also cited the need for additional pedestrian access over the railroad tracks in order to create a loop tying in to Howard Avenue and connecting to Antique Row.

## Site 3: Fire Station on Connecticut Avenue and Plyers Mill Road

Although admittedly a controversial issue, the panel did question whether the current fire station was the best use for the corner of Connecticut Avenue and Plyers Mill Road, given the visibility of the site and the congestion that the fire station causes whenever lights are pre-empted by a call.

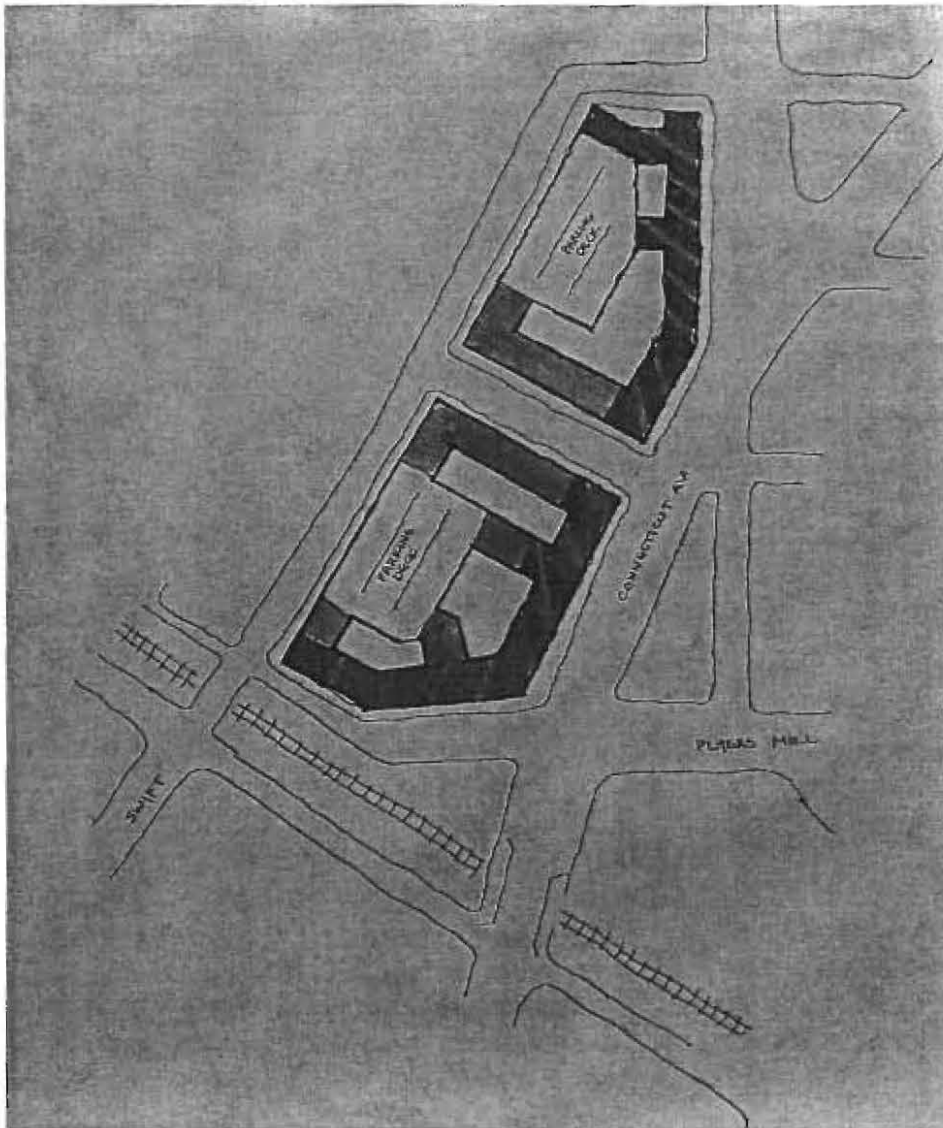


Illustration 6: Fire Station and surrounding parcels block study

Thus, as a long-term proposition, the panel recommended further study regarding the possibility of relocating the station and redeveloping the site into lower-scale mixed-use. Assemblage with the parcels west and north of the station would be necessary to create the footprint needed for such a project.

## Planning and Design

The "branding" of a community is physically manifested in its streetscapes and built environment, which is why the panel called for both streetscape improvements and for creating opportunities for the types of development that provide residences, lodging, offices, and retail and entertainment venues. These various uses add to the streetscape through their built form and, perhaps more importantly, generate the residents, patrons, and visitors that will use those streetscapes and activate them. This complementary approach, however, leads to the inevitable question: which comes first? The streetscape improvements, or the new development? It was the panel's position that the improvements must come first, in order to create the environment that will more likely attract private investment. To that end, the panel spent a great deal of time identifying which areas provided the greatest opportunities for redevelopment, as discussed above in Development Strategies. Following the identification of the areas, the panel focused on which planning and design elements would create the most fertile environment for such redevelopment to occur.

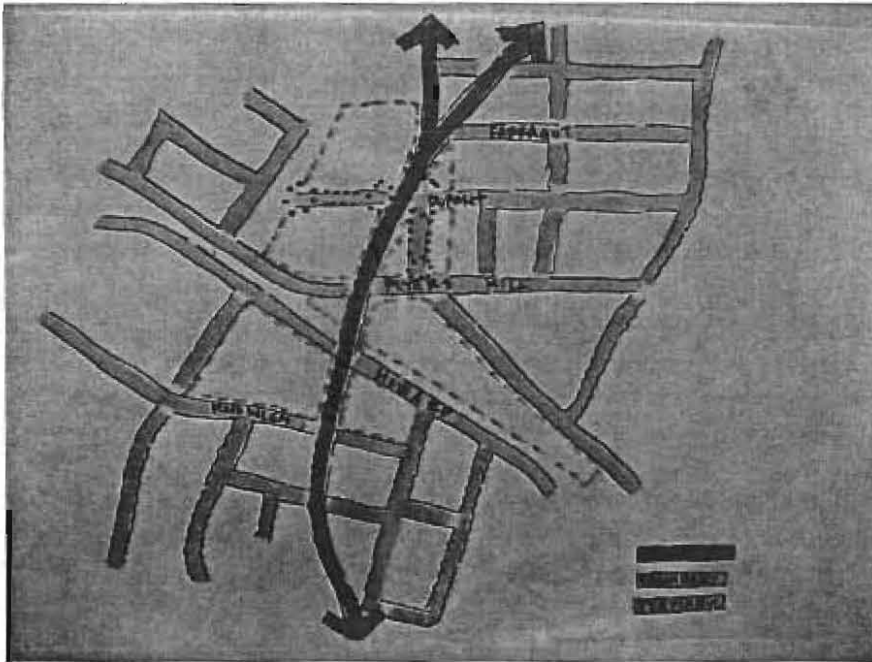
### Hierarchy of Streets

Clearly, both the greater opportunities and the greatest challenges for the town of Kensington are presented by its street network, which carry a large number of commuters through the town and provide accessibility to both them and residents. However, the streets are somewhat confusing to navigate, frequently overcrowded, and place primacy on the automobile and their users—particularly commuters—rather than pedestrians, and/or town residents.

The panel recommends an integrated approach of improvement and redevelopment along the town's main thoroughfare, Connecticut Avenue. However, acknowledging that Connecticut Avenue will continue to be a major thoroughfare and there is only so much that can be done to foster a pedestrian-friendly, urban environment on it, the panel also recommends improvement to the town's secondary and tertiary streets. The panel recommends employing measures to slow down the traffic on Connecticut Avenue, and creating interesting streetscapes, such that users of the road will feel compelled to recognize that they have entered a unique place when driving through Kensington, and will be inspired to truly, "Explore Kensington," as the town's signage currently encourages them to do.

It is usually on secondary and even tertiary streets that we find the more walkable environments that encourage outdoor cafes and other venues that promote social interaction and convey civic vitality, and indeed, Kensington already has several interesting streets, including Howard Avenue along Antiques Row, and Metropolitan Avenue, where a number of local retail establishments have creatively reused existing space. It is also worth noting that both streets already feature a number of improvements, including pavers, historic signage and lighting, and plantings, for which the panel commends the town for its proactive efforts. What is lacking, however, is a

connection among the sites, which would enable the whole to become greater than the sum of its parts.



As a starting point, the panel mapped out the Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary streets of the town, and made recommendations accordingly. Given its primacy—both as a street and as a source of concern for residents, the panel spent a great deal of time discussing Connecticut Avenue, and potential improvements to it.

### **Primary Street- Connecticut Avenue**

The panel recognized that many recommendations have been made in the past regarding potential improvements to Connecticut Avenue, and that it likely can not add much to the discussion, given how comprehensively Connecticut Avenue has previously been evaluated. Rather, the panel recommended those ideas—both short- and long-term, that hold the most promise given the constraints that exist, in order to enable the town of Kensington to "take back" Connecticut Avenue, in a functional manner.

The challenges facing Connecticut Avenue are well-known: it is a six-lane median divided suburban arterial, with a thirty mile per hour posted speed limit, five gas stations that cater to very high volume of through traffic, and a character that can best be described as auto-dominant contemporary suburban. Because the signals are timed in a manner that so much of green time has to be devoted to north-south traffic, it is difficult to go east-west. Buses north of Knowles Avenue are very frequent (which is beneficial in many ways), however, they block one of three through lanes on Connecticut Avenue, and the fire department frequently pre-empt signals when responding to a call from its station on the corner of Connecticut and Plyers Mill.

Recommendations by the panel, which could be implemented in the short-term through coordination with the State Highway Administration and Montgomery County, include the following:

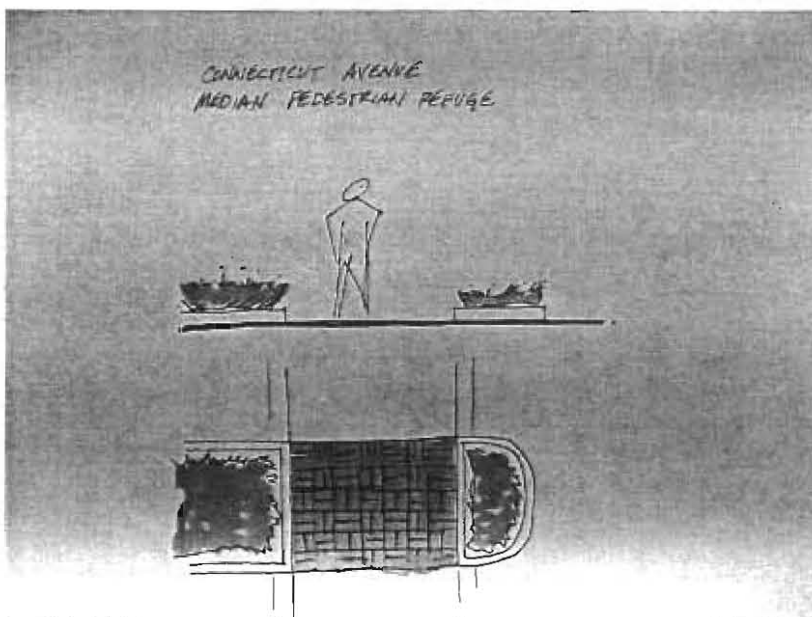
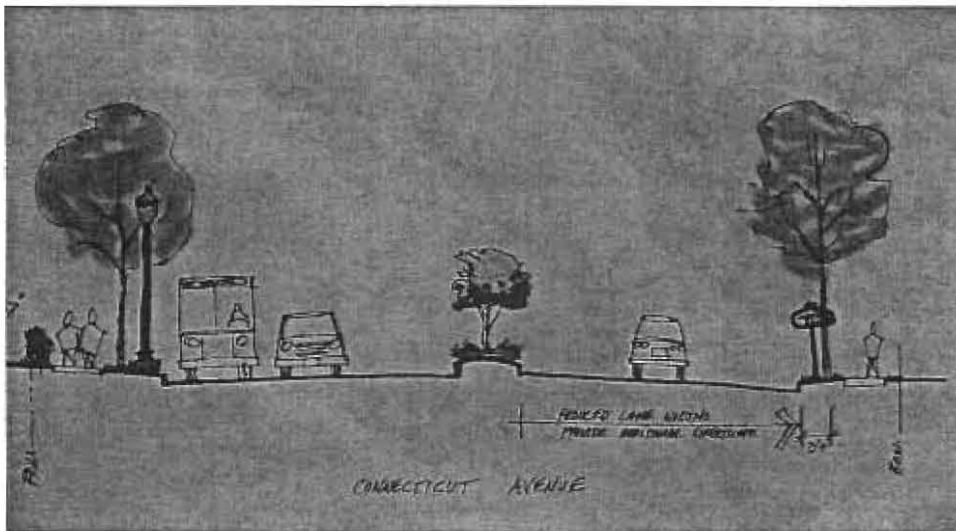
- Reduce speed limit from 30 to 25 mph (which is the speed limit in the District)
- Narrow travel lanes from 12 feet to 10 or 11 feet
- Construct median pedestrian refuges (6+ feet), which could be accomplished by narrowing of lanes
- Modify signal timing
  - 25 mph progression
  - Re-allocate green time from Connecticut Avenue (north-south) to side streets (east-west)
- Enhance pedestrian treatments
  - Pedestrian signal countdown heads
  - Textured crosswalks
- Reduce curb radii
- Provide for curb parking during off-peak times (creates security for pedestrians)
- Provide bus lay-by lane or re-locate bus stops

Note: This recommendation would require further study, as the panel does want to promote transit usage as much as possible, and yet experience has shown that many bus drivers do not like/use these lanes, as it is more difficult for them to then re-enter thoroughfare

- Consolidate driveways
- Underground overhead utilities
- Provide streetscape improvements (some of which have already been implemented in Kensington, particularly along side streets)
  - Special Kensington street signs
  - Historic character streetlights
  - Street trees coordinated
  - Widened tree lawns
  - Enhanced pedestrian walks (brick)

- Median landscape plantings
- Streetscape plantings along sides where possible
- Enhanced gateways
- Enhanced railroad bridge
- Pedestrian refuges at medians
- Wayfinding signage

The following illustrations provide examples of Connecticut Avenue streetscape improvements:



Transportation recommendations by the panel which could be implemented in the longer-term include the following:

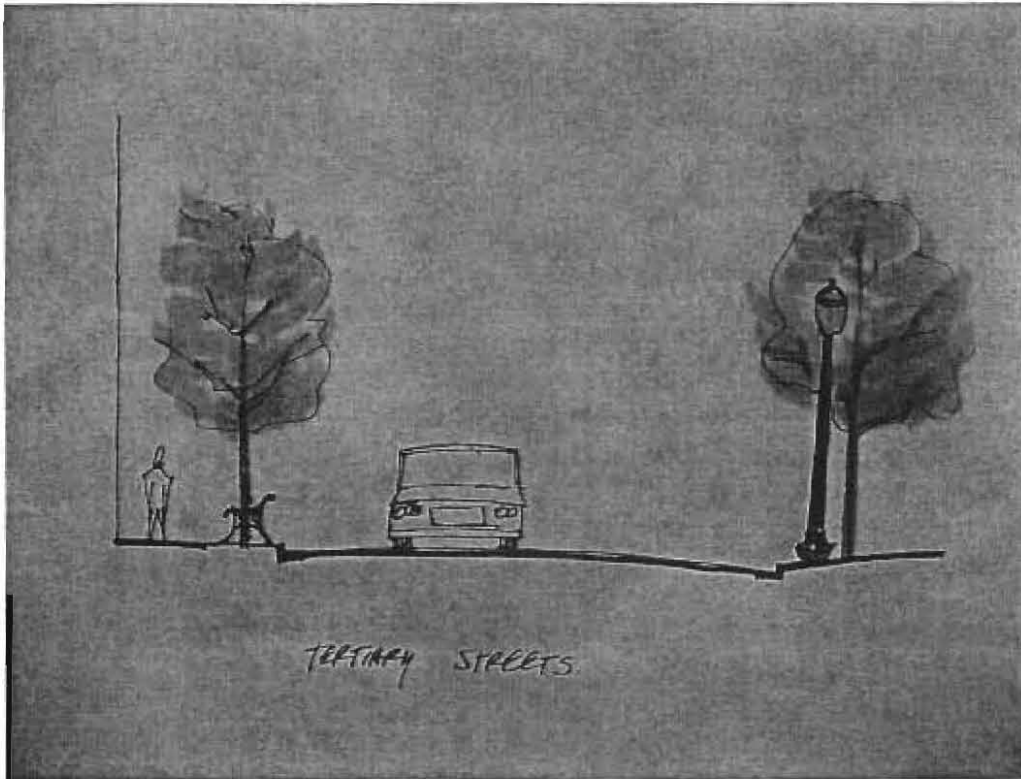
- Construct roundabout: Plyers Mill Road/Metropolitan Avenue/Concord Street  
Note: This is worth further detailed studies, although backed-up westbound traffic on Connecticut Avenue could render recommendation dysfunctional
- Re-locate fire station
- Support regional solutions
  - Promote public transportation (Purple Line, BRT, Metro, enhanced bus, etc.)
  - Encourage compact, mixed-use, transit-oriented development
- Enhance connectivity
  - Summit Avenue Extension
  - One-way pair (Connecticut Avenue southbound/Armory Avenue Extended northbound between Baltimore Street and University Boulevard)

### **Secondary and Tertiary Streets**

As mentioned above, the panel noted the improvements already made on many of Kensington's secondary and tertiary streets, and commended the town and its partners for what they have already accomplished. Much of what the panel recommends regarding these streets is a continuation and expansion of those efforts, including:

- Historic character streetlights
- Street trees in tree wells
- Connected pedestrian walks with brick enhancements
- Coordinated/complete system of special pedestrian crosswalks
- Special Kensington street signs
- Consistent street furniture

As illustrated by the following:



### **Abandoning Streets**

Although it may at first seem counterintuitive to recommend closing a street when attempting to foster greater mobility, the panel noted that, should the redevelopment of some of the targeted areas become likely, the abandonment of several streets should be considered to promote land assemblage and increase buildable area. These streets do not currently serve as thoroughfares, but rather only provide access to a parking structure or a currently existing business. Several such streets were identified within the town boundaries, including Dupont Avenue off of Connecticut.

### **Pedestrian walkway**

As mentioned in the Development Strategies section of the report, the panel recommended a feasibility study regarding an additional pedestrian walkway over the railroad tracks, possibly extending from Armory Avenue to Metropolitan Avenue, in conjunction with any redevelopment of the Konterra Cement/Mizzell Lumber site. The panel recognizes the challenges involved in pedestrian bridges, particularly those over railroad tracks (which require higher clearances). However, the panel is concerned about the seemingly tenuous legal status of the currently-utilized at-grade crossing and

feels that additional pedestrian crossing opportunities are essential in order to effectuate the needed connectivity of the community and its assets. This crossing would be in addition to improvements being made to the Connecticut Avenue pedestrian crossing. The panel acknowledged that whenever pedestrians are given a choice to cross at grade or via walkway, they will choose the at-grade crossing the vast majority of time. Nonetheless, should the current at-track crossing of the railroad tracks become unusable, for whatever reason, pedestrians would need an alternative option.

## **Parking**

The residents and stakeholders expressed concern with respect to the sufficiency of parking in the community, and how best to accommodate the parking required by redevelopment. The panel recognized that there simply can't be development without sufficient parking being provided. The panel recommended further study of current parking availability to determine the extent of the actual issue. This study would evaluate how many spaces exist, both on- and off-street, short- and long-term, and public- and privately-owned, how many parking spaces are occupied at different times of the day, and the vacancy rates. Such data are necessary to properly address this issue, as well as to determine whether a parking district is called for- an issue about which the panel had mixed feelings and, in the absence of more information, could not reach a conclusion.

The panel noted, however, that parking should be within 500 feet of any destination, and to that end, the panel sought to distribute parking evenly throughout all redevelopment sites, as illustrated in the block studies found in the Development Strategies section of the report. The need for much of this parking to be structured, in order to enable buildings to be close to the street and to promote a pedestrian-friendly environment, further highlights the importance of being able to assemble large enough tracts of land to accommodate and incorporate such structures. This factor played a large role in the panel's selection of the redevelopment sites.

## Implementation

The panel noted that Kensington's current environment is reflective of several factors, including:

- The 1978 Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan;
- The current zoning categories on the parcels;
- Small parcel sizes;
- Fragmented Ownership; and,
- Low-Density Commercial Uses.

### Sector Planning Process

Thus, at the outset of the new Sector Plan process, the panel recommended that the town seek far more flexible zoning standards for Kensington, which would set the parameters for new types of development, particularly on the opportunity sites discussed in this report:

- Mixed-Use zones with ground floor retail- office and/or residential above;
- A wide range of retail uses permitted;
- Minimum lot size to encourage assemblage;
- Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 1.0 to 1.5 (Hardware City Shopping Center at 1.5; Metropolitan Avenue at 1.0; Fire Station at 1.0);
- Maximum Height 65 feet allowed;
- Build-to Line to define street edge;
- Eliminate gas stations as special exception uses;
- Create a street and block plan that allows for proper dimensions for development;
- Create a parking strategy for the redevelopment area, with flexible parking standards; and

- Define the limits of the town's core.

## **Parking and Transportation**

In conjunction with these zoning changes, the panel recommends that the town seek the following parking requirement modifications:

- Allow for on-street parking to count toward requirement; and
- Allow shared parking on all sites.

The panel also recommended working with the State Highway Administration to make the short-term changes proposed to Connecticut Avenue. The panel concedes that Connecticut Avenue is destined to operate in a congested condition irrespective of the changes made to it. The goal of the State Highway Administration is to maximize capacity on Connecticut Avenue which results in high volumes of vehicles going through Kensington. Based on the citizens of Kensington's desire to "take Connecticut Avenue back", the panel provided recommendations, as specified in the Planning and Design section of the report, to mitigate the adverse impact of Connecticut Avenue by slowing down the traffic; possibly diverting some of the traffic; and facilitating the crossing of Connecticut Avenue from the east side to the west side to make it possible for pedestrians to shop on both sides of the street.

## **Other Available Tools, Resources, and Incentives**

The panel recognizes that the town of Kensington has limited resources, and that the streetscape and other public space improvements recommended by the panel—in order to lay the groundwork for, and complement—potential redevelopment, is costly. To that end, the panel recommends the following possible funding sources:

- Utilize existing taxing authority (parking or urban district tax, or Tax Increment Financing)
- Apply for funding under the Main Street Program (State Highway Administration, National Trust for Historic Preservation)
  - The character and elements that exist in the town should meet their criteria
- Secure perpetual rights to allow at-grade pedestrian crossings from CSX or identify alternative means of crossing tracks.

## Conclusion

Although most of the panel's analysis and recommendations focused on the long-term, the panel is pleased to be able to provide its thoughts at the outset of the pending Sector Plan Amendment for the town of Kensington. It is the panel's hope that it can provide the town's citizens and officials with a market-based "outsider's perspective of the type of redevelopment citizens can seek to enable with the Sector Plan Amendment. ULI Washington hopes that the information in this report provides a springboard to that process, and helps guide the town of Kensington as it seeks to connect, enhance, and add to its many existing assets, so that many more residents of the region will have the same opportunity as the panel did, to "Explore Kensington."






OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

Isiah Leggett  
County Executive

MEMORANDUM

December 14, 2009

To: Nancy Floreen, Council President

From: Isiah Leggett, County Executive 

Subject: Planning Board Draft Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan

I am pleased to provide Executive Branch comments on the Planning Board Draft Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan. I support the overall vision of the plan to preserve the unique assets of Kensington while creating a mixed-use, pedestrian friendly town center with pedestrian and bicycle connections to surrounding neighborhoods. I commend the Planning Board and its staff for its sensitivity to preservation of the culturally rich and historic assets of Kensington.

This draft plan utilizes the proposed Commercial Residential Zone that is being developed by the Council and the Planning Board. This zone holds promise as an incentive based mixed-use zone that will encourage developers to address important policy areas in connection with proposed developments. However, I remain concerned that we are once again reviewing a plan for adoption that is predicated on a zone that does not yet exist. My staff will continue to work with M-NCPPC and Council staff on this new zone to ensure that it is effective in accomplishing its objectives to foster quality mixed-use development.

Attached to these comments is an appendix of the detailed technical comments from the Executive Branch departments that we hope your staff will find helpful in making this plan an effective tool for the future development in Kensington. The projected costs of this plan and a fiscal impact summary based on a range of development projected by Planning Board staff are also attached. The complexities of the area make it more difficult to predict the amount of redevelopment that this area will actually experience. For that reason staff has stated the potential fiscal impacts as a range.

The Sector Plan encourages the broadening of housing choices for all income levels by applying the proposed CR zone to the Town Center, both within and near the Town of Kensington. The Plan assumes that the CR zone will promote the development of more multifamily housing to achieve a better balance of single and multi-family housing options. I fully support the housing objective of the Plan. I am concerned though that the Town of Kensington has not adopted Montgomery County Code Chapter 25A which provides for

Nancy Floreen, Council President  
December 14, 2009  
Page 2 of 2

moderately priced housing and enables the Department of Housing and Community Affairs to administer the marketing, sale, rental, resale, and control of MPDUs. Without this authority the goal of broadening housing choices for an array of incomes may not be achieved.

Depending on the amount of residential development that actually occurs, the area could realize a growth in the student population ranging between 57 and 171 additional school children. The Plan does not recommend an additional school for students arising out of development in the Plan area, but mentions that Kensington Elementary may be needed to accommodate White Flint Sector Plan development. Montgomery County Public Schools should address the validity of these assumptions.

The Kensington Plan Area is sandwiched between the White Flint Sector Plan area and the Wheaton Central Business District. While the draft Plan assumes that improvements to MARC rail will reduce vehicle trips, there is no discussion of what these improvements may be. The Plan also identifies that the intersections of Connecticut Avenue and Plyers Mill and Connecticut Avenue and Knowles Avenue will be out of balance for local area review. Given the trips that will be generated by redevelopment in the adjoining sectors, there needs to be an understanding of what transportation impacts there will be and a better vision of how MARC and other measures will reduce vehicle trips.

The Plan recommends re-evaluating the boundaries of the Historic District and identifies some key areas for inclusion in the Historic District. I am pleased that the Plan is sensitive to these areas and I encourage greater attention to Historic Preservation in the draft Plan.

I hope these comments and the attached technical comments are helpful to the Council as it considers the draft Town of Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan. The Executive Branch is committed to working with the Council, the Town of Kensington, and the Planning Board on the Kensington Sector Plan and its future implementation.

Attachments: Technical Comments  
Summary of Fiscal Impact Scenarios  
Operating Cost Estimates

**Montgomery County Departmental Technical Comments on  
Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan  
October 2009 Planning Board Draft**

<b>Department of Economic Development.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Department of Environmental Protection.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Department of Fire and Rescue Services.....</b>	<b>6</b>
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## **Department of Economic Development Comments on the Planning Board Draft Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan**

### General

- Many of the graphics (in particular some of the maps showing proposed zoning changes) are too small to read. Suggest that they be enlarged so that they can effectively illustrate the companion text.

### Recommendations section

- No reference to zoning changes. Since the plan proposes to rezone a significant portion of the Plan area to the new CR zone, this should be included as a key bullet in the Recommendations section. It might also be useful to move the existing and proposed zoning maps on pages 31-33 to this section.
- Suggest amending first bullet in Diversity subsection to read: 'Creating an active Town Center with new residential *and neighborhood-serving retail* uses.'

### Area-wide Recommendations section

- The Stormwater Management subsection recommends using the CR zones to provide incentives for 'green' landscaping options. This is the first reference in the report to the CR zone. As noted above, the plan's recommendation to rezone a large portion of the Plan area needs to be noted earlier in the Recommendations section.
- CR zone is variously referred to as CR or C-R.
- Some of the language in the Diversity subsection is a little unclear:
  - "The new district will allow commercial and residential uses to be mixed at varying densities that will be determined by individual property owners." This is not entirely accurate. Assuming that property owners go through optional method development, the exact densities and building heights will be based on the level of public amenities they are willing to provide and their negotiations with the Planning Board.
  - "This Plan makes three recommendations for properties and areas under study: total FAR, non-residential and residential FAR, and building height." The fact that these are the three key components of the CR zone is not explained until the Implementation section.

### Town Center section

- Last sentence, second paragraph, reads "This Plan encourages the retention of existing businesses' but does not explain how.

### Crafts/Services District section

- DED supports the Plan's recommendation to retain the current I-1 zoning for the West Howard Avenue portion of this district, which is home to a number of regionally renowned antique shops, furniture restoration businesses, and art studios. DED also supports the Plan's recommendations for streetscaping and stormwater management upgrades to West Howard Avenue, which are needed to enhance its draw as a regional destination and improve environmental sustainability.

#### Metropolitan Avenue Area section

- 3700 Plyers Mill Road LLC Property subsection does not indicate what zoning is being recommended. Also, it references “..an existing one-family neighborhood.” Should this read “a neighborhood of single family homes”?
- Stubbs Property subsection does not indicate what zoning is being recommended.

#### Implementation section:

- Zoning subsection: Paragraph three indicates that the CR zone’s standard method limits overall density to .5 FAR. Since the CR zone has not yet been adopted by the County Council and the FAR ceiling under standard method development is still being discussed, suggest striking this sentence.
- Public Schools subsection is a little confusing.
- Libraries subsection states ‘This Plan recognizes that land use recommendations in White Flint may have an impact on demand at Kensington Park Library.’ Isn’t a satellite library being recommended in the White Flint Sector Plan?

## **Department of Environmental Protection Comments on the Planning Board Draft Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan**

Many of these comments were included in DEP's comments on the July 2009 Public Hearing Draft of the Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan.

1. General: The sector plan still does not discuss in any manner the water and sewer systems providing service for the sector plan area, or include any related discussion concerning the Water and Sewer Plan and its designation of community (public) service for the sector plan area. The plan should indicate whether proposed redevelopment will require replacement of water and/or sewer infrastructure in or around the plan area.
2. Page 14, bullets under Environment Paragraph: The document states that "A high priority should be placed on the following goals:
  - reducing the amount of impervious surfaces
  - treating stormwater runoff with environmentally sensitive design (ESD) or low impact development (LID)"

There is nothing specific in the plan that emphasizes reducing impervious surfaces. It appears to be the same high density/high impervious land use plan that has been used in the past for other Central Business District areas. There are no additional green space requirements and no options to allow for greater building heights (but maintaining the same FAR) in exchange for green space.

Treating stormwater runoff with ESD or LID is more than a priority; it is now a regulatory mandate under the state's new stormwater management regulations. The document should acknowledge this.

3. Page 14, bullets under Stormwater Management: Kensington residents already pay the Water Quality Protection Charge (WQPC). If projects in Kensington are to be funded out of the Water Quality Protection Fund (WQPF), they would be prioritized along with other needs Countywide and implemented based on the priority list.

This section refers to incorporating "open section roadway swales rather than conventional curbs" and designing sidewalks that "disconnect runoff from conventional storm drain systems." Neither of these is shown in the typical design standards for streets.

This section also encourages the use of the CR Zone to provide incentives for a variety of landscaping options for stormwater management. As noted previously, many of the techniques described are now required as part of the state's new stormwater regulations, so incentives should not be awarded for implementing them.

DEP has a program to undertake roadway Low Impact Development (LID) projects that would be funded by the WQPF. The currently identified projects are not within the Kensington Sector Plan area. As DEP moves forward with a systematic implementation of roadway LID, County roadways within Kensington will be prioritized along with other County roads. Roadway LID projects in Kensington could be undertaken through other funding sources.

4. Page 15, last bullet under Environmental Sustainability: The statement should be expanded to include specific goals for tree canopy. Suggest rewording the bullet to read "Increase tree canopy cover along streets and within medians, within existing neighborhoods, commercial areas, and on parkland *to meet or exceed the American Forests recommendations for canopy coverage.*" These recommendations can be found at [www.americanforests.org/resources/urbanforests/treedeficit.php](http://www.americanforests.org/resources/urbanforests/treedeficit.php), and were included in 2009 Climate Protection Plan for Montgomery County (<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/dep/Sustainability/2009mococlimprotplan.pdf>, page 77).
5. Page 24, 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet under Silver Creek: Removal of the concrete channel in Silver Creek would be an extremely low priority for DEP's stream restoration program because of downstream fish barriers, higher priority given to restoration of natural channels and extremely high cost.

## **Department of Fire and Rescue Comments on the Planning Board Draft Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan**

MCFRS comments generally pertain to the draft plan's lack of recognition of fire-rescue needs and requirements. As was the case with the previous draft, impacts of the plan's recommendations on fire department access, response time, and load bearing requirements of roadways and access ways with relation to heavy fire-rescue apparatus have not been addressed in the plan. In the attachment to this memorandum, I offer specific comments related to these concerns.

### **SPECIFIC COMMENTS**

#### Fire-Rescue Facility/Resource Needs

**Page:** 29

**Excerpt:** "No additional [public] facilities would be needed to accommodate the development proposed in this Plan."

**Comment:** The draft plan does not provide the estimated number of additional commercial square feet and additional number of dwelling units associated with residential development. Furthermore, no study has been conducted to confirm that the local fire station (i.e., Kensington Volunteer Fire Department Station #5) is adequately staffed and equipped to handle additional fire and EMS incident call load associated with proposed development. While the station itself is likely to remain adequate, the resources deployed at the station might be inadequate to accommodate the additional call load associated with proposed development and occupants.

#### Urban Design Guidelines

**Page:** 28

**Excerpt:** "Urban design guidelines will provide specifics on street classifications, types and functions, building form, orientation and massing, and open space."

**Comment:** Input and review of the design guidelines by impacted departments/agencies is imperative for cohesive implementation.

#### Street Oriented Development

**Pages:** 11

**Excerpts:** "Minimize conflicts with motorists, transit buses, and pedestrians through low target speeds for vehicles, access management, and reduced curb cuts."

**Comment:** These items must be balanced with service needs for the community. Low target speeds increase emergency vehicle response time, while access management and reduced curb cuts, if not properly implemented, have the potential to reduce emergency services access to buildings and their occupants.

#### Pedestrian-oriented Urban Design

**Pages:** 1, 8, 9

**Excerpts:** "pedestrian friendly connections," "give pedestrians priority," "encourage pedestrian-centered urban design," "streets should be safe, pedestrian-oriented environments," "narrower urban road sections"

**Comment:** "Pedestrian-friendly" and similar phrases typically translate to reduced fire-rescue service access due to narrow streets, intersections with tight turning radii, and poor access to and around buildings. Narrow streets and tight turning radii delay emergency response, and poor access to and around buildings prevent or adversely impact the proper tactical positioning of fire-rescue vehicles. Pedestrian-oriented design is achievable provided that fire-rescue access requirements are adequately addressed.

#### Curb Cuts

**Page:** 11

**Excerpt:** "Minimize curb cuts to reduce conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles."

**Comment:** Sufficient and adequate access points to and around buildings - made possible by curb cuts - must be provided and be as unrestricted as possible to allow access by fire-rescue vehicles. This is particularly important to the proper tactical positioning of large fire apparatus (i.e., pumpers and aerial units) around buildings to execute fire suppression operations and exterior rescues).

#### On-Street Parking

**Page:** 11

**Excerpt:** "encourage on-street parking"

**Comment:** Recent M-NCPPC practice, in an effort to encourage on-street parking, has allowed on-street parking to count toward required parking minimums. If on-street parking is necessary to achieve parking minimums, then there is no overflow parking available, thus creating opportunity for parking infractions that often lead to restricted emergency vehicle access.

#### Reduced Road Speed and Traffic Choke Points

**Page:** 9

**Excerpts:** "Reduce target speed of Connecticut Avenue to 30 mph," "refrain from widening roadway intersections to accommodate through-vehicle traffic"

**Comment:** Connecticut Avenue is a major thoroughfare. Arbitrarily lowering the speed limit and restricting needed intersection improvements will create major choke points in Kensington significantly affecting response time of fire-rescue vehicles.

#### Permeable Pavement

**Page:** 14

**Excerpt:** "Use, where feasible, permeable paving for roads, road shoulders, parking lots, and parking lanes"

**Comment:** Permeable surfaces are not conducive to supporting the high load-bearing requirements of heavy fire-rescue apparatus. Any road surface that could be used by fire-rescue vehicles for travel or positioning must be of sufficient load bearing capacity to support fire-rescue vehicles weighing up to 80,000 pounds. Any permeable surfaces that might be permitted must be on a structural sub-grade to support heavy vehicles.

#### Road Widths

**Pages:** 9, 38

**Excerpts/References:** “refrain from widening roadway intersections,” and the “Master Plan of Highways Roadway Classifications” table

**Comment:** The proposed recommendations concerning road width as proposed on page 9 will significantly slow response time of fire-rescue vehicles. The table on page 38 proposes cross sections for public roadways in Kensington. MCFRS has not been given the opportunity to participate in any analysis of whether the proposed cross sections will accommodate both traffic volume and timely emergency response.

#### Street Trees

**Pages:** 11 (plan), 47 (appendix)

**Excerpts:** “provide street trees,” “street tree planting,” “street trees providing canopy and landscaping on all streets”

**Comment:** Size, height, and spacing of street trees must allow adequate access for the positioning of aerial ladders and ground ladders to building windows, particularly where buildings are over 3 stories in height. Poorly placed trees greatly restrict aerial apparatus operations at taller buildings. Tree location and density must be strategically planned to minimize these conflicts.

## **Department of Health and Human Services Comments on the Planning Board Draft Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan**

### Walkability

The Department agrees with the recommendation for creating new ways for townspeople to move car-free (safely and efficiently) throughout the Town, including the Town Center. A more walkable community is likely to be a healthier community. Walkability ties in to obesity avoidance/reduction, physical fitness, and other cardiovascular benefits.

However, the Department also acknowledges the challenge faced by planners and those stakeholders who are seeking to reduce dependence on cars. The draft cites an existing auto-centric commercial center. The proposed commercial-residential (CR) zoning (mixed land use) is likely part of the solution.

### Transportation

Because public health, land use, and transportation are interconnected, we would like to see in the plan additional considerations for increasing and, if necessary, redirecting public transportation. Expanded alternatives to car transportation and the resultant reductions in carbon emissions will positively impact air quality, an important consideration for public health. We recommend the inclusion of public health outcomes measures, such as those that involve more healthful air, for transportation projects in order to highlight these connections.

The Department endorses the value of medians as pedestrian refuges at intersections to shorten crosswalk distances. This particularly helps meet the needs of senior and disabled crossers. Providing longer green light/walk cycles or building under or over passes are other options for ensuring comfortable crossing for pedestrians.

### Recreational Opportunities

The Department notes the CR requirement for development of public use space, which may include active recreation space, as a public amenity. Exercise and workout routines, facilitated by recreation and fitness facilities, have been proven to improve quality of life, reduce stress level and enhance emotional wellbeing for residents.

Should the HOC relocate its Kensington administrative offices, the use of that property for community recreation (informal play and exercise) could greatly benefit Kensington residents, particularly children and families. We also endorse the importance of increasing neighborhood connectivity to walkable areas, bikeways, trails, and parkland through sidewalks and other means.

### New Development

(47)

The draft plan hypothesizes that the Town Center will add 267 units of residential housing, with an additional 237 units outside of Town Center. These 504 units would increase the number of existing residential units by 47% (calculated from figures cited in the report). This increase could result in changed demographics that may have implications for human services.

A new look at population characteristics (e.g., young children, seniors, etc.), and how needs will change after the hypothetical expansion and the “push and pull” factors in the final plan, will be required. According to 2000 Census data, compared to all contiguous Zip Codes, 20895 has the highest percentage of its residents earning in both the \$50K-75K and the \$75K-100K ranges. It also has the lowest percentage of persons living below the poverty line. These figures may change with the additional Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit capacity envisioned in the plan.

The hypothetical increase of 139,000 square feet of commercial space in the CR districts provides an opportunity to meet the increasing need and demand from the County’s aging population for high density housing near healthful food stores, pharmacies, and medical offices. Businesses that cater to visitors without meeting the needs of local residents will detract from the value of mixed use development.

#### Socialization

A primary need for the senior population involves design features that facilitate the ability for people to interact and engage with other people (both other seniors and non-seniors). The closest senior center to the Kensington Sector is Holiday Park. There should be consideration or provisions for ensuring transportation to Holiday Park. To the extent that the Kensington library is a hub for social engagement and interaction, it should be navigable from all new and existing housing in the Sector for seniors and others with mobility devices.

#### Community Gardens

The Department is pleased to note the multiple mentions of community gardens in neighborhoods. Among other environmental and community-building benefits, gardens increase the likelihood that residents will reap the nutritional benefits of having locally-grown fresh fruits and vegetables as staples of their diets.

**Department of Housing and Community Affairs Comments on the  
Planning Board Draft Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan**

The Department of Housing and Community Affairs has reviewed the Planning Board Draft Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan. DHCA supports the Plan's vision that the Kensington Town Center will "broaden housing choices for an array of ages and income," and the recommendation under Diversity of "creating an active Town Center with new residential uses."

The Plan appears to encourage the goal of broadening housing choices for all income levels by applying the proposed CR zone to the Town Center, both within and near the Town of Kensington. The Plan indicates that the CR zone will promote the development of more multifamily housing.

There is a point regarding this matter that remains to be resolved. The County Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 59 of the County Code, applies in the Town of Kensington, so the new CR Zone will apply in the incorporated area. The Town of Kensington, however, has not adopted Code Chapter 25A, Housing, Moderately Priced. Even if MPDUs are produced by new development in the Town, the Department of Housing and Community Affairs lacks the authority to administer the marketing, sale, rental, resale, and control of MPDUs within the Town of Kensington.

DHCA supports the application of the CR zone to the Town Center, but conditions that support on two important factors:

- Sufficient residential densities should be required in the CR zone to provide for multifamily residential development, including MPDUs.
- Developments within the incorporated Town of Kensington that have an MPDU requirement must enter into an agreement with the County to permit the County's administration of the units in a manner similar to the administration of MPDUs elsewhere. This agreement should be entered into prior to the issuance of building permits for the development and should be recorded in the land records as a covenant on the property

Other than providing the required affordable housing in the redevelopment of the Town Center, the Plan makes no recommendations for increasing the amount of affordable housing in the Plan area. In keeping with the recommendations of the County Executive's Affordable Housing Task Force, DHCA again requests that the following recommendations be added to the plan:

- Affordable housing should be considered as part of the reuse or redevelopment of any publicly owned sites in Kensington Sector Plan Area.
- Affordable housing should be evaluated as a supplemental use on the site of any public facility that may be constructed in the Plan Area.

The Sector Plan should also include a numeric affordable housing target for the redevelopment that takes place in the Plan Area.

DHCA, as noted on page 29 of the draft Plan, has been working on a plan for streetscape, building façade, and stormwater management (SWM) improvements for West Howard Avenue. The redevelopment of the State Highway Administration (SHA) site on West Howard Avenue may allow some SWM improvements to be incorporated on the site, but additional SWM improvements will be needed between the SHA site and Rock Creek. DHCA requests that the plan allow consideration for the location of such SWM improvements in Rock Creek Park due to the steep slope of West Howard Avenue and the high degree of impervious surfaces along the street and the properties it serves. Given the multiple owners along West Howard Avenue, and their lack of agreement on redevelopment of the area, DHCA is not planning on pursuing any capital projects in the area at this time.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this draft plan. If you have any questions about these recommendations, please contact Scott Reilly, Chief Operating Officer, at 240-777-3640 or [scott.reilly@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:scott.reilly@montgomerycountymd.gov).

## **Department of Public Libraries Comments on the Planning Board Draft Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan**

The Planning Board draft document mentions libraries in two areas – Open Space System on page 13 and Libraries on page 29.

The Open Space System comments indicate that unused green space behind the library parking should be contemplated for public space and stormwater expansion but should take into consideration any future library expansion plans. If the Sector plan is suggesting that green space and stormwater expansion for the Town of Kensington be considered for the library lot, the Department would have concerns about multi jurisdictional use of the property, which I am sure DEP and Parks might also echo. If the comments relate to stormwater management and open space for the library's use, the Department states again that DEP is in the final planning stages of a project that will locate Low Impact Design (LID) stormwater management practices on the unused green spaces of the library's parking lot including 2 rain gardens, 2 rain gardens/infiltration trenches, 2 tree boxes, and street tree plantings. Construction is planned to start late spring 2010 and be completed by mid summer 2010. So the Sector plan's recommendation is already being implemented.

The Library section on page 29 includes information on both the Kensington Park and Noyes Libraries and mentions the impact on future renovation plans for Kensington Park of the White Flint sector plan. The Department previously indicated that future plans for the Noyes Library may change the focus and purpose of the one room historic structure and thus might impact parking. Earlier this summer, the Town of Kensington put up no parking signs around the Montgomery Avenue circle, which significantly impacted the locations where library customers could park until a call to the Town identified the erection of the signs as a mistake. If the Library Department changes the mission of the Noyes Library, the need for some additional parking spaces may arise. Approximately 10 cars can now park around the triangle where the library is located. The need for daytime and possible evening visitor parking around the library and on nearby streets must continue to be considered as the street grid for the plan is discussed and implemented.

The plan also calls for the extension of Summit Avenue from Plyers Mill Road to Connecticut Avenue (page 23 of the draft plan and page 41 of the Appendix). The Department has concerns about implementation of this recommendation due to the current traffic patterns that result in cars that cut through the library's parking lot to avoid the intersection/ traffic backups at Summit and Knowles as well as at Connecticut and Plyers Mill (other end of Summit). The Department is concerned that use of the library's parking lot as a shortcut could worsen if Summit Ave is improved and extended.

Finally, the library's property fronting Knowles lacks a sidewalk along the north side of the street between the driveway and the next property to the east. There is a sidewalk on the hilly portion of the actual library property which runs the length of the building and

drops down again to Knowles at the far eastern end, but we have been asked to provide a sidewalk on the street itself in light of ADA and other access concerns.

**Montgomery County Department of Transportation Comments on  
Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan – Planning Board Draft  
(MNCPPC, October 2009)**

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) has the following concerns and comments regarding the subject draft plan.

General Concerns

1. The planning area covered by this draft contains territory for both an incorporated municipality (Town of Kensington) and several unincorporated areas (Montgomery County). The text should differentiate between incorporated and unincorporated areas, particularly where implementation of plan recommendations will be done by different governmental bodies.
2. Kensington is located midway between White Flint and the Wheaton CBD, two other areas currently undergoing plan amendments. East-west travel between these three areas will increase and the plan draft acknowledges that Kensington is already a bottleneck between the other two but it does not recommend any comprehensive solutions supported by transportation analysis. Intersections along the two major arterials in the plan area (MD 185 and MD 193) should be reviewed for existing and future (build-out) conditions in terms of a Critical Lane Volume analysis. If failing levels of service are indicated, some form of remedy consistent with land use/transportation balance should be proposed. It is unacceptable to state, "Refrain from widening intersections to accommodate through vehicle traffic" (p. 14) without proposing another specific solution.
3. More emphasis needs to be given to the MARC station within the planning area. The station has played a major role in the development of Kensington and the plan should recognize this role and project how the commuter service can be used to help accomplish the plan vision. There is no discussion as to how the presence of the station, and commuter train service, can leverage development and aid in achieving transit modal shares. There also needs to be an analysis of how much commuter parking is existing (the station currently has 125 – 150 daily boardings) and how much additional parking might be needed to support higher ridership.
4. The extension of Summit Avenue is shown as going through (taking) the current Town of Kensington public works facility. This plan must propose an alternative site for the relocation of this facility and must include text that the Town will relocate this facility at its own cost and in advance of the implementation of the road.
5. Bikeway M-M' (as shown in the Kensington Wheaton Master Plan) is not shown on this plan draft; either show it on the map on p. 38 and add it to the bikeway table, or add some text formally deleting it so there is no future confusion as to its status.

6. A bikeway should be proposed for University Boulevard (MD 193) within the planning area.
7. A discussion of the jobs to housing ratio is missing from this plan and needs to be addressed so that there is a clear understanding of how this sector will compare with the countywide ratio of 1.6 to 1.
8. The historic preservation sections are insufficient and incomplete. Since this is a comprehensive amendment, a full historic preservation analysis of each candidate site or district needs to be done as part of this plan update, including a determination as to whether the site or district should be added to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation, retained on the Locational Atlas, or deleted from the Locational Atlas. It is insufficient to simply identify potential candidates for future evaluation.
9. It is unclear to MCDOT whether this Plan should be evaluated solely subject to the provisions of Article 66B of the Maryland Code (since it is a plan predominantly for a municipality) or subject to the provisions of Article 66B and Article 28 (since the plan includes a minor amount of unincorporated Montgomery County territory as well). The Plan needs to contain at least a brief description of the legal roles of the Park and Planning Commission, the Town of Kensington Council, and the Montgomery County Council for the approval and adoption process of the plan and zoning authority during implementation.

#### Specific Comments

- p. i change the lower case "diversity" (page 19) to **districts**
- p. 1 under "Vision", the plan should not be recommending additional areas and sites for historic preservation evaluation; as a comprehensive amendment it should include complete evaluations and determinations for all candidate sites or districts
- p. 3 the first paragraph states that "The east-west crossing requires many travelers to use Connecticut Avenue . . .". This is incorrect since travelers may use Summit Avenue instead.
  - the third paragraph states that ". . . the track crossing is inconvenient and inhospitable"; this is incorrect since the track crossing is not a pedestrian connection; it is only for use by MARC passengers within the station area
  - the fourth paragraph states ". . . businesses and [sic] well as plumbers, . . .", change "and" to "as"
- p. 4 clarify whether this is the local, or National Register, historic district in the figure title and legend
  - show all proposed streets

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- p. 9 revise the sixth bullet by adding "at appropriate locations" after "pedestrian crosswalks"
- p. 10 this figure needs a legend to explain what the different colors mean  
- show Kensington town boundary
- p. 12 this Historic Preservation section needs to be completely rewritten to include evaluations of all candidate historic sites and districts and determinations as to whether they should be designated as historic or not
- p. 13 delete the third bullet symbol at the bottom of the page; it is superfluous
- p. 14 the second bullet under Stormwater Management is proposing a section that is not in the County's design standards and is therefore invalid in the unincorporated areas of the plan  
- the third bullet under Stormwater Management is proposing permeable paving for roads which is not currently permitted by the County and is therefore invalid in the unincorporated areas of the plan
- p. 15 change all references from Lexington Avenue to Lexington Street  
- delete "County" from the third (Plyers Mill Road) line in the Table; this is a Town street not operated by the County
- p. 18 why is this page blank?
- p. 19 the heading "diversity" should be changed to districts
- p. 20 the third bullet at the top of the page is proposing a median design that is not in the County's design standards and is therefore invalid in the unincorporated areas of the plan  
- clarify in the "Concept" section the meaning of "continuous pedestrian street" so that there is no confusion that it is a Business District Street open to vehicular travel  
- in the third bullet under "Connectivity" add the limits of "from Connecticut Avenue to Nash Place" after Dupont Avenue for consistency with the figure on page 37 and the table on page 38
- p. 22 show all proposed streets
- p. 27 Ken-Gar should be evaluated as a historic site or district as part of this plan, and a determination made as to whether to designate it or not
- p. 29 under Capital Improvements, any transportation projects in the unincorporated areas of the plan need to be coordinated with MCDOT

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- p. 30 show all proposed streets
- p. 32 show all proposed streets
- p. 34 show all proposed streets
- "LB-5" is inconsistent with the table on p. 36
  - "SR-17" is inconsistent with the Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan, which shows it going via Dupont and Nash
  - Bikeway "SR-24" should be extended to bikeway "SR-16" for transportation interconnectivity
  - "LB-2" should be continued easterly to "LB-6" and should only be shown on one alignment (either A or B) with no asterisk
  - "LB-4" should be continued westerly to "SR-54" via Calvert Place and Prospect Street
  - add a bikeway on Howard Avenue from Summit Avenue to Connecticut Avenue
  - what are BL-100 and BL-101? They do not appear in the Countywide Bikeways Master Plan, nor are they shown on the table on page 35 of this plan draft
- p. 35 Bikeway "SR-16" should be referenced in the table since it is shown on the figure on p. 38 and a portion of it is within the Sector Plan Area
- an additional separate bridge for pedestrians and bicyclists is recommended over the CSX along the west side of Connecticut Avenue as part of Bikeway SR-17
- p. 36 redesignate all route numbers as "LB-xx"
- an additional segment of "LB-1" is recommended from Knowles Avenue to Howard Avenue
  - "LB-5" is inconsistent with the figure on p. 34
  - Bikeway M-M' (as shown in the Kensington Wheaton Master Plan) is not shown on this plan draft; either show it on the map on p. 34 and add it to this table, or add some text formally deleting it so there is no future confusion as to its status
  - "LB-2" should extend to St. Paul Street rather than Connecticut Avenue
  - "LB-4" should extend to Summit Avenue rather than Kensington Parkway
  - add a bikeway on Howard Avenue from Summit Avenue to Connecticut Avenue
- p. 37 only show one alignment for B-3 (either A or B) and delete the asterisk and footnote; the latter is superfluous
- p. 38 all of Arterial A-62 should have a R-O-W of 100' to be consistent with the previous plan

- Arterial A-67 should have 4 travel lanes to be consistent with the previous plan
- additional right-of-way is recommended for MD 185 so it can accommodate Proposed Bikeways B-1 and SR-17
- B-1 should have a R-O-W of 80' to be consistent with the previous plan
- B-4 should only go to the Plan Boundary (not to Capitol View Ave) to be internally consistent
- B-5 should be named Lexington Street (not Ave) extension; also the one travel lane is internally inconsistent with the on road bikeway
- B-6 should have a R-O-W of 80' to be consistent with the previous plan
- B-7 should have a R-O-W of 70' to be consistent with the text on p. 20
- B-8 should have a R-O-W of 80' to be consistent with the previous plan
- B-9 should have a R-O-W of 80' to be consistent with the previous plan
- B-10 should have a R-O-W of 70' to be consistent with the text on p. 20
- Primary Residential Street P-2 needs proper and accurate Limits
- Primary Residential Street P-4 needs proper and accurate Limits
- the second bullet under "Notes" should state Lexington Street (not Avenue) extension
- the third bullet under "Notes" is inconsistent with the historic district boundary shown in the figure on p. 4
- it would be helpful to document the existing right-of-way widths in this table

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# **Fiscal Impact Analysis for the Kensington Sector Plan** **Summary of Fiscal Impact Scenarios**

Summary: Below are 6 fiscal impact scenarios that attempt to show the range of development possibilities that could follow from the enactment of the Kensington and Vicinity Master Plan. They are based on the County's Economic Development Fund Fiscal Impact Model, and represent a broad-brush look at the higher level revenues and expenditures, rather than being all-inclusive. The figures do not include additional CIP expenditures, which will follow in a separate document. These scenarios represent the relative extremes of the fiscal impact spectrum, based on there being at least some minimal amount of new development.

Scenarios					
Residential and Commercial Development		Commercial Development Only		Residential Development Only	
New Residential and Commercial FAR is Minimal	New Residential and Commercial FAR is Maximal	New Commercial FAR is Minimal	New Commercial FAR is Maximal	New Residential FAR is Minimal	New Residential FAR is Maximal

THE NEW DEVELOPMENT					
Estimated New Commercial FAR Assessed Value	\$41,755,000	\$124,650,500	\$41,755,000	\$124,650,500	
Estimated Value of Personal Property	\$4,175,500	\$12,465,050	\$4,175,500	\$12,465,050	
Real Property Tax rate at location	\$0.91	\$0.91	\$0.91	\$0.91	
Personal Property Tax rate at location	\$2.28	\$2.28	\$2.28	\$2.28	
Number of Jobs in New Commercial Space	2,088	6,233	2,088	6,233	
Average Salary per New Job	\$72,012	\$72,012	\$72,012	\$72,012	
Income Tax per new job	\$1,728	\$1,728	\$1,728	\$1,728	
Estimated New Residential FAR Assessed Value	\$75,800,000	\$227,300,909		\$75,800,000	\$227,300,909
Real Property Tax Rate	\$0.91	\$0.91		\$0.91	\$0.91

DEMOGRAPHICS					
Net new households	379	1,137		379	1,137
New Population	963	2,888		963	2,888
Additional Schoolchildren	57	171		57	171
Additional College Students	8	23		8	23
Number of new jobs	2,088	6,233	2,088	6,233	
% of Jobs County Residents	60%	60%	60%	60%	
Net new jobs are County residents	1,253	3,740	1,253	3,740	

REVENUES					
Property Tax Revenues					
From Primary Investment	\$476,466	\$1,422,387	\$476,466	\$1,422,387	
From Secondary Investment	\$692,054	\$2,075,257		\$692,054	\$2,075,257
Income Tax Revenues					
From Primary Income	\$655,021	\$1,965,063		\$655,021	\$1,965,063
From Secondary Income	\$210,331	\$630,992		\$210,331	\$630,992
Energy & Telephone Taxes	\$396,733	\$1,186,795	\$231,264	\$690,388	\$165,469
Other Job Related Revenues	\$104,387	\$311,935	\$83,216	\$248,424	\$21,170
Other Population Related Revenues	\$221,755	\$665,265		\$221,755	\$665,265
Total County Revenues	\$2,756,746	\$8,257,694	\$790,946	\$2,361,199	\$1,965,800

COSTS OF COUNTY SERVICE					
Population related costs	\$920,757	\$2,762,270	\$0	\$0	\$920,757
Job related costs	\$673,808	\$2,015,955	\$371,745	\$1,109,763	\$302,064
Schoolchildren costs	\$817,377	\$2,452,131	\$0	\$0	\$817,377
College student costs	\$66,184	\$198,551	\$0	\$0	\$66,184
Total County Service Costs	\$2,478,125	\$7,428,905	\$371,745	\$1,109,763	\$2,106,381

TOTAL FISCAL IMPACT of the COMPANY					
(Revenues Less Costs)	\$278,621	\$828,789	\$419,202	\$1,251,436	(\$140,581)

## Assumptions

1. New Commercial Development based on data from Planning staff
2. Assessed value of new commercial development is based on \$100 per square foot of valuation
3. New residential development based on data from Planning staff
4. Assessed value of new residential development is based on \$200,000 per unit valuation.
  - because the Planning Board Draft notes that most of the new units will be in multi-family housing.
  - current countywide average for condominium units is nearly \$250,000 (these typically have higher assessed values than non-cond multifamily housing)
5. Revenues and Service Costs are based on FY10 Approved Budget figures calculated on a unit of population basis

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**County Capital and Operating Cost Estimates  
Assumed to be Incurred as a Result of the  
Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan**

<b>Capital Improvement Projects</b>			
<b>Project</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>	<b>Implem. Dept.</b>
<b>Business District Streets</b>			
Summit Avenue Extension	Plyers Mill Rd. to Farragut Ave. (to Connecticut Ave.)	\$10,000,000	DOT
Lexington Street Extension	Metropolitan Ave. to Plyers Mill Rd.	\$6,000,000	DOT
<b>Public Facilities</b>			
Full Service Community Recreation Center	Utilizing the complete program of requirements (33,000 nsf, 4 athletic fields, playcourt, playground, 190 car parking)	\$31,400,000	DGS
<b>Subtotal – Capital Improvement Projects</b>		<b>\$47,400,000</b>	
<b>Operating Budget Impacts</b>			
Additional staffing and operating expenses for new Recreation Center	Cost estimate includes personnel (\$328,000, 6.5WYs); operating (\$404,000)	\$732,000	REC
<b>Subtotal – Operating Budget Impacts</b>		<b>\$732,000</b>	
<b>Total Cost Estimate</b>		<b>\$48,132,000</b>	

**Notes and assumptions:**

**Business District Streets:**

- Cost estimates were prepared using master plan level of information, no engineering has been done;
- Costs represent 2009 dollars with a +/- 50% level of accuracy.
- Since Kensington is a separate municipality with its own public works capability, there is uncertainty as to who would construct and who would fund the proposed improvements (State, County or Town).

**Stormwater Management:**

- Kensington accepted the storm drain system from WSSC in the 1960s and has not been paying the storm drain property tax. Kensington is responsible for repair or replacement of the culvert under Oberon Street.
- Kensington residents pay the Water Quality Protection Charge (WQPC). Therefore, projects in Kensington can be funded out of the Water Quality Protection Fund (WQPF) and would be prioritized along with other needs Countywide and implemented based on the priority list.

**Libraries:**

- The White Flint Sector Plan calls for a public transportation oriented Express Library to be built in the vicinity of the Metro station with the understanding that residents needing a "full service" library would use the Kensington Park or Rockville Libraries. In the event there is an increase in use at Kensington Park, the future renovation of the Kensington Park Library might require expansion of the building and parking.



OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

Isiah Leggett  
County Executive

Jennifer A. Hughes  
Director

MEMORANDUM

August 15, 2011

TO: Diane Schwartz-Jones, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer  
FROM: Jennifer A. Hughes, Director  
SUBJECT: Fiscal Impact Analysis for the Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan

XX AUG 17 2 35 PM

Attached are the cost estimates and fiscal impact analysis associated with the Planning Board's draft *Kensington Sector Plan* dated June 2011. This information replaces the December 2009 Fiscal Impact Analysis.

The cost information was provided by the Departments of Transportation, General Services, Recreation, Police, Fire and Rescue Services, and Libraries. Please note that capital project cost estimates are high-level, order-of-magnitude estimates. Final estimates for capital projects would not be available until completion of design development.

The Departments of Housing and Community Affairs, Health and Human Services, Environmental Protection, Permitting Services, Economic Development, and the Mid-County Regional Services Center report no fiscal impact.

The Department of Finance prepared the attached scenarios to show the range of development possibilities that could follow from the enactment of the Kensington Sector Plan. The scenarios are based on the County's Economic Development Fund Fiscal Impact Model, and represent a broad-brush look at the higher level revenues and expenditures, rather than being all-inclusive.

If you have any questions, please contact Amy Wilson, Office of Management and Budget, at 240-777-2775 or Mike Coveyou, Department of Finance, at 240-777-8878.

JAH:aw

Attachment

Office of the Director

101 Monroe Street, 14th Floor • Rockville, Maryland 20850 • 240-777-2800  
www.montgomerycountymd.gov

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Diane Schwartz-Jones, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer

August 15, 2011

Page 2

c: Arthur Holmes, Jr., Director, Department of Transportation  
David Dise, Director, Department of General Services  
Joseph F. Beach, Director, Department of Finance  
Rick Nelson, Director, Department of Housing and Community Affairs  
Hadi Mansouri, Acting Director, Department of Permitting Services  
Ana Lopez van Balen, Director, Mid-County Regional Services Center  
Uma S. Ahluwalia, Director, Department of Health and Human Services  
Steve Silverman, Director, Economic Development  
Robert Hoyt, Director, Department of Environmental Protection  
Richard Bowers, Chief, Fire and Rescue Services  
Thomas Manger, Chief, Department of Police  
Parker Hamilton, Director, Department of Public Libraries  
Mike Coveyou, Department of Finance  
Amy Wilson, Office of Management and Budget  
Rob Kline, Department of General Services

**County Capital and Operating Cost Estimates**  
**Assumed to be Incurred as a Result of the**  
**Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan**  
**August 2011**

<b>Capital Improvement Projects</b>		
<b>Project</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>
<b>Business District Streets</b>		
Summit Avenue Extension	Plyers Mill Rd. to Farragut Ave. (to Connecticut Ave.)	\$10,000,000
Lexington Street Extension	Metropolitan Ave. to Plyers Mill Rd.	\$6,000,000
<b>Public Facilities</b>		
Full Service Community Recreation Center	Utilizing the complete program of requirements (33,000 nsf, 4 athletic fields, playcourt, playground, 190 car parking)	\$31,400,000
<b>Subtotal – Capital Improvement Projects</b>		<b>\$47,400,000</b>
<b>Operating Budget Impacts</b>		
Additional staffing and operating expenses for new Recreation Center	First year cost estimate includes: personnel (\$176,210, 3.9WYs); operating (\$218,390); and one-time costs (\$43,400)	\$438,000
Additional police officers, assigned to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> District, needed to ensure public safety as a result of increased number of residents, workers and visitors.	First year cost estimate includes: personnel (\$855,030, 11WYs); operating (\$146,190); and one-time costs (\$659,890)	\$1,661,110
Additional staffing and operating expenses for Kensington Volunteer Fire Department Station #5. Engine upgraded from a 3-person minimum staffed unit to a 4-person unit to provide more effective suppression services and advanced life support (ALS) first-responder unit to address an anticipated increase in ALS incidents.	First year cost estimate includes: personnel (\$380,000, 4.5WYs); and one-time operating costs for recruit class training, turnout gear, and uniforms (\$100,000)	\$480,000
<b>Subtotal – Operating Budget Impacts</b>		<b>2,579,110</b>
<b>Total Cost Estimate</b>		<b>49,979,110</b>

Notes and assumptions:

Business District Streets:

- Cost estimates were prepared using master plan level of information, no engineering has been done.
- Costs represent 2009 dollars with a +/- 50% level of accuracy.

- Since Kensington is a separate municipality with its own public works capability, there is uncertainty as to who would construct and who would fund the proposed improvements (State, County or Town).

#### Police

- Police presented four costs estimate scenarios based on the projected increase in residents and workers. Cost estimates ranged from \$604,040 for 4WYs to 1,661,110 for 11WYs. Estimates are based on 1.2 officers per 1,000 residents.

#### Fire and Rescue Services:

- MCERS will evaluate additional resource needs as development/redevelopment occurs and population increases in Kensington.

#### Stormwater Management:

- Kensington accepted the storm drain system from WSSC in the 1960s and has not been paying the storm drain property tax. Kensington is responsible for repair or replacement of the culvert under Oberon Street.
- Kensington residents pay the Water Quality Protection Charge (WQPC). Therefore, projects in Kensington can be funded out of the Water Quality Protection Fund (WQPF) and would be prioritized along with other needs Countywide and implemented based on the priority list.

#### Libraries:

- The White Flint Sector Plan calls for a public transportation oriented Express Library to be built in the vicinity of the Metro station with the understanding that residents needing a "full service" library would use the Kensington Park or Rockville Libraries. In the event there is an increase in use at Kensington Park, the future renovation of the Kensington Park Library might require expansion of the building and parking.

**Fiscal Impact Analysis for the Kensington Sector Plan**  
**Summary of Fiscal Impact Scenarios**

Scenarios			
A	B	C	D
Residential FAR <i>Maximal</i> Commercial FAR <i>Minimal</i>	Minimal FAR Residential and Commercial	Maximal FAR Residential and Commercial	Residential FAR <i>Minimal</i> Commercial FAR <i>Maximal</i>

**THE NEW DEVELOPMENT**

1	Estimated New Commercial FAR Assessed Value	\$41,755,000	\$41,755,000	\$124,650,500	\$124,650,500
2	Estimated Value of Personal Property	\$4,175,500	\$4,175,500	\$12,465,050	\$12,465,050
3	Real Property Tax rate at location	\$0.91	\$0.91	\$0.91	\$0.91
4	Personal Property Tax rate at location	\$2.28	\$2.28	\$2.28	\$2.28
5	Number of Jobs in New Commercial Space	2,088	2,088	6,233	6,233
6	Average Salary per New Job	\$72,012	\$72,012	\$72,012	\$72,012
7	Income Tax per new job	\$1,728	\$1,728	\$1,728	\$1,728
8	Estimated New Residential FAR Assessed Value	\$227,300,909	\$75,800,000	\$227,300,909	\$75,800,000
9	Real Property Tax Rate	\$0.91	\$0.91	\$0.91	\$0.91

**DEMOGRAPHICS**

10	Net new households	1,137	379	1,137	379
11	New Population	2,888	963	2,888	963
12	Additional Schoolchildren	171	57	171	57
13	Additional College Students	23	8	23	8
14	Number of new jobs	2,088	2,088	6,233	6,233
15	% of Jobs County Residents	60%	60%	60%	60%
16	Net new jobs are County residents	1,253	1,253	3,740	3,740

**REVENUES**

Property Tax Revenues					
17	From New Commercial Development	\$476,466	\$476,466	\$1,422,387	\$1,422,387
18	From New Residential Development	\$2,075,257	\$692,054	\$2,075,257	\$692,054
19	Income Tax Revenues (from New Residential Development)	\$2,596,055	\$865,352	\$2,596,055	\$865,352
20	Energy & Telephone Taxes	\$727,671	\$396,733	\$1,186,795	\$855,857
21	Other Job Related Revenues	\$146,727	\$104,387	\$311,935	\$269,595
22	Other Population Related Revenues	\$665,265	\$221,755	\$665,265	\$221,755
23	Total County Revenues	\$6,687,442	\$2,756,746	\$8,257,694	\$4,326,999

**COSTS OF COUNTY SERVICE**

24	Population related costs	\$2,762,270	\$920,757	\$2,762,270	\$920,757
25	Job related costs	\$1,277,936	\$673,808	\$2,015,955	\$1,411,827
26	Schoolchildren costs	\$2,452,131	\$817,377	\$2,452,131	\$817,377
27	College student costs	\$198,551	\$66,184	\$198,551	\$66,184
28	Total County Service Costs	\$6,690,887	\$2,478,125	\$7,428,905	\$3,216,144

<b>TOTAL FISCAL IMPACT</b>					
29	(Revenues Less Costs)	(\$3,445)	\$278,621	\$828,789	\$1,110,855

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The four fiscal impact scenarios attempt to show the range of development possibilities that could follow from the enactment of the Kensington and Vicinity Master Plan. They are based on the County's Economic Development Fund Fiscal Impact Model, and represent a broad-brush look at the higher level revenues and expenditures, rather than being all-inclusive. The figures do not include additional CIP expenditures, which are reported separately. These scenarios represent the relative extremes of the fiscal impact spectrum, based on there being at least some minimal amount of new development.

#### Assumptions

1. New Commercial Development based on data from Planning staff.
2. Assessed value of new commercial development is based on \$100 per square foot of valuation.
3. New residential development based on data from Planning staff.
4. Assessed value of new residential development is based on \$200,000 per unit valuation.
  - because the Planning Board Draft notes that most of the new units will be in multi-family housing.
  - current countywide average for condominium units is nearly \$250,000 (these typically have higher assessed value than non-condo multifamily housing)
5. Revenues and Service Costs are based on FY10 Approved Budget figures calculated on a unit of population basis.



DEPARTMENT OF  
POLICE

ISIAH LEGGETT  
*County Executive*

J. THOMAS MANGER  
*Chief of Police*

July 18, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: Amy Wilson, Senior Management and Budget Specialist  
Office of Management and Budget

FROM: Captain Russell E. Hamill, III  
Commander, Bethesda 2nd District

SUBJECT: Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan

The purpose of this memorandum is to address the impact on police staffing of the *Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan*.

The Sector Plan, as detailed in the referenced material forwarded to my attention, will alter the physical footprint of the Kensington area and increase the number of residents, workers and visitors in the area as well. There are a number of scenarios currently on the table and in each populations are expected to increase (as noted below).

CLB

This proposed increase in population will necessitate an increase in the number of officers assigned to the Second District. According to FBI UCR 2000, suburban counties reported an average of 2.7 officers per 1,000 residents. In contrast, Montgomery County has an average of 1.2 officers per 1,000 residents. Public safety and traffic issues (vehicular and pedestrian) are of equal concern to our agency and Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) plan reviews need to be of paramount importance as we form the foundation of growth of the new Kensington. The table below details the currently proposed household, population and jobs increases for the future, as well as the estimated increase in officers required to fulfill our public safety obligations to the community.

Scenario	Households	Residents	Jobs	Pop. Total	Ofc's(2.7)	(1.2)
Scenario A	1,137	2,888	2,088	4,976	13.5	6
Scenario B	379	963	2,088	4,976	13.5	6
Scenario C	1,137	2,888	6,233	9,121	24.3	10.9
Scenario D	379	963	6,233	7,196	19	8.5

Current figures demonstrate that an estimated additional 963 - 2,888 permanent residents will be coming to the Kensington area. The plan also provides approval for an additional 2,088 - 6,233 jobs, raising the day time population by those figures as well. Each of the scenarios offered will require additional police officers to help ensure public safety and it is recommended that we utilize numbers closer to the national average when doing cost estimates. Please see the attached matrix for the estimated costs involved, per officer, according to each scenario offered.

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## Traffic Safety & CPTED

This staffing level assumes that CPTED will be considered when the expansion takes place. The deployment of officers in the new Kensington Sector should be based on the team concept that has been successful in the Bethesda Central Business District (CBD). Design of mass transit centers and parking garages is of particular import as well. The concerns over the crime issues of thefts from auto and auto thefts, as well as other quality of life issues, are of particular concern in densely populated urban areas. These issues must be considered when designing residential and commercial space, as well as county and private sector parking areas. Favorable environmental design will be essential to maximize our ability to provide police services. Roadway and street designs should promote pedestrian use with investment in streetscape elements including pedestrian crossing markings and signals, landscaping, street trees, and benches. New streets with short block lengths, approximately 250 to 350 feet in length, will promote walking and allow mid-block pedestrian crossings to bring people out to the sidewalks. Due to safety concerns, all mid-block crossings should include safety light activation features - especially when one considers that a large percentage of the pedestrian injuries and fatalities in this county are due to pedestrians crossing outside of established crossings/walkways.

I hope these cost estimates are helpful in your planning for a new vibrant and safe Kensington Sector and I look forward to working with you as this plan moves to fruition. Please feel free to contact me directly at 301-652-9200, if you have any questions or concerns.

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FY12	(Personnel) Salary & Fringes	POC Equip.	Marked Veh.	Veh Equip.	Recurring Motorpool Chrgbacks	Total Operating Exp.	Total Personnel & Operating Exp.
New Officer	77,730	8,880	23,515	25,720	12,870.0	70,985	148,715.0

	Households	Residents	Jobs	Pop. Total	Officers (2.7)	Personnel Cost (New Ofc.)	Total PC	Operating Exp. per Officer	Total OE	Total PC & OE	Officers (1.2)	Personnel cost (New Ofc.)	Total PC	Operating Exp. per Officer	Total OE	Total PC & OE
Scenario A	1,137	2,888	2,088	4,976	13.5	77,730	1,049,355	70,985	958,298	2,007,653	6	77,730	466,380	70,985	425,910	892,290
Scenario B	379	963	2,088	4,976	13.5	77,730	1,049,355	70,985	958,298	2,007,653	6	77,730	466,380	70,985	425,910	892,290
Scenario C	1,137	2,888	6,233	9,121	24.6	77,730	1,912,158	70,985	1,746,231	3,658,389	11	77,730	847,257	70,985	773,737	1,620,994
Scenario D	379	963	6,233	7,196	19.0	77,730	1,476,870	70,985	1,348,715	2,825,585	9	77,730	660,705	70,985	603,373	1,264,078

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August 3, 2011

TO: Diane Schwartz Jones, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer  
Office of the County Executive

FROM: Bob Simpson, Senior Planning Specialist  
Department of Transportation

SUBJECT: Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan – Remanded Version  
Planning Board (Final) Draft

This is in response to your memorandum of July 1, 2011 requesting review and comments on the subject document. We are pleased to submit the attached set of comments for your consideration. We request that they be included in the coordinated Executive Branch comment package that is prepared for the upcoming Planning Board public hearing. We further request that you share the attached with appropriate Planning Board staff.

Again, thank you for providing this review opportunity. If you have any questions, or need further information regarding this submission, please feel free to contact me at voice-mail extension 7-7193 or e-mail [bob.simpson@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:bob.simpson@montgomerycountymd.gov). Your coordination of Executive Branch plan reviews is appreciated.

Attachments

cc: Arthur Holmes, Jr., MCDOT  
Edgar Gonzalez, MCDOT  
Julie White, OCE

**Montgomery County Department of Transportation Comments on  
Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan – Remanded Planning Board (Final) Draft  
(MNCPPC, June 2011)**

**August 3, 2011**

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) has the following concerns and comments regarding the subject draft plan.

General Concerns

1. Kensington is located midway between White Flint and the Wheaton CBD, two other areas currently undergoing plan amendments. East-west travel between these three areas will increase and the plan draft acknowledges that Kensington is already a bottleneck between the other two but it does not recommend any comprehensive solutions supported by transportation analysis. Intersections along the two major arterials in the plan area (MD 185 and MD 193) should be reviewed for existing and future (build-out) conditions in terms of a Critical Lane Volume analysis. If failing levels of service are indicated, some form of remedy consistent with land use/transportation balance should be proposed. It is unacceptable to state, "Refrain from widening intersections to accommodate through vehicle traffic" (p. 9).
2. More emphasis needs to be given to the MARC station within the planning area. The station has played a major role in the development of Kensington and the plan should recognize this role and project how the commuter service can be used to help accomplish the plan vision. There is no discussion as to how the presence of the station, and commuter train service, can leverage development and aid in achieving transit modal shares. There also needs to be an analysis of how much commuter parking is existing (the station currently has 125 – 150 daily boardings) and how much additional parking might be needed to support higher ridership.
3. The extension of Summit Avenue via Farragut Avenue is clearly called for on page 9 which correctly reflects MCDOT, Council staff and PHED committee positions on this issue. However, on page 19 the text in the seventh bullet seems to indicate continued uncertainty about this alignment, and on page 36 Map 15 still shows two alternate alignments. All text and mapping needs to consistently show a single alignment of this extension via Farragut Avenue.
4. The extension of Summit Avenue is shown as going through (taking) the current Town public works facility. This plan must propose an alternative site for the relocation of this facility and must include text that the Town will relocate this facility at its own cost and in advance of the implementation of the road.

5. Bikeway M-M' (as shown in the Kensington Wheaton Master Plan) is not shown on this plan draft; either show it on the map on p. 38 and add it to the bikeway table, or add text formally deleting it so there is no confusion as to its status.
6. A discussion of the jobs to housing ratio is missing from this plan and needs to be addressed so that there is a clear understanding of how this sector will compare with the countywide ratio of 1.6 to 1.
7. The historic preservation sections are insufficient and incomplete. First, since the Kensington Cabin historic resource has been designated by Council, this Plan needs to make clear whether, the Cabin will be an individual resource outside and immediately contiguous to the Kensington Historic District, or a contributing resource within the Historic District. Second, since this is a comprehensive amendment, a full historic preservation analysis of each candidate site or district needs to be done as part of this plan update, including a determination as to whether the site or district should be added to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, retained on the Locational Atlas, or deleted from the Locational Atlas. It is insufficient to simply identify potential candidates for future evaluation.
8. It is unclear to MCDOT whether this Plan should be evaluated solely subject to the provisions of Article 66B of the Maryland Code (since it is a plan predominantly for a municipality) or subject to the provisions of Article 66B and Article 28 (since the plan includes a minor amount of unincorporated Montgomery County territory as well). The Plan needs to contain a better description of the legal roles of the Park and Planning Commission, the Town of Kensington Council, and the Montgomery County Council for the approval and adoption process of the plan and zoning authority during implementation. The explanation provided on page 29 under "Regulatory Review is incomplete and appears to end in mid-sentence.
9. The Draft does not contain some elements of a comprehensive plan required under State law. An example is that Maryland Code Article 66B, Section 1.04(b)(1)(iii) requires as part of the water resources element that it "Identifies drinking water and other water resources that will be adequate for the needs of existing and future development proposed in the land use element of the plan, considering available data provided by the Department of the Environment." However, the Kensington Plan neither identifies the source and provider of drinking water for the land uses in the Plan nor does it comment on the adequacy of those sources for the ultimate consumption of water at the build out levels envisioned in the Plan. Similarly, there is not a sensitive areas element as such. Perhaps no sensitive areas exist within the planning area; if this is so, it should be proactively stated. On the other hand, if any sensitive areas exist, a separate section of the plan with that title should be included.

10. The Draft does not contain certain “Visions” required under State law. Although it may be possible that all of the visions enumerated in Section 66B of State Law can be construed from the overall text of the plan, nevertheless, it makes more sense to simply enumerate the required visions in the Vision section of the Plan to easily demonstrate the Town’s compliance with the wording in State Law that “Each local jurisdiction shall . . . include in its plan . . . all of the visions set forth in Section 1.01 of this article.”

#### Specific Comments

- contents            many pages are incorrectly numbered, plus the “diversity” subsection (page 17) is completely omitted under **area wide recommendations**
- p. 1                under “Vision”, the plan should not be recommending additional areas and sites for historic preservation evaluation; as a comprehensive amendment it should include complete evaluations and determinations for all candidate sites or districts within the body of this plan
- p. 3                the first paragraph states that “The east-west crossing requires many travelers to use Connecticut Avenue . . .”. This is incorrect since travelers may use Summit Avenue instead.
- the third paragraph states that “. . . the track crossing is inconvenient and inhospitable”; this is incorrect since the track crossing is not a pedestrian connection; it is only for use by MARC passengers within the station area
- the fourth paragraph incorrectly states “. . . businesses and [sic] well as plumbers, . . .”, “and” should be deleted and replaced with “as”
- p. 4                clarify that this is the local, not National Register, historic district in the figure title and legend
- show the Kensington Cabin location and clarify whether it is an individual site just outside, but contiguous to the Historic District, or that it is a contributing resource within the Historic District
- show all proposed streets
- p. 6                in the second paragraph, clarify that the local Historic District has different boundaries than the National Register Historic District
- p. 9                in the third bullet the recommendation to decrease pavement widths using the new context sensitive design standards is misleading (because most of these streets already exist and reduction is not operationally feasible – unless a large redevelopment opportunity with significant site frontage presents itself in the future); it is applicable only to new road extensions (such as Summit Avenue between Plyers Mill & Connecticut)
- the fourth bullet appears to contradict the third paragraph on p.8 (“ . . . As redevelopment occurs, projects will be required to mitigate the increase in traffic congestion directly attributable to them, following the Growth Policy in effect at the time of development.”)

- revise the seventh bullet by adding "at appropriate locations" after "pedestrian crosswalks"
- p. 10 this figure needs a legend to explain what the different colors mean
- delete the color coding of those areas that are outside of the Town Center (i.e., are in the Craft/Services, Connecticut/University Boulevard, and Metropolitan Avenue districts)
- p. 12 this Historic Preservation section needs to be completely rewritten to include evaluations of all candidate historic sites and districts and determinations as to whether they should be designated as historic or not as befits a comprehensive amendment
- clarify whether the Kensington Cabin is an individual site just outside, but contiguous to the Historic District, or that it is a contributing resource within the Historic District
- p. 14 the second bullet under Stormwater Management is proposing a section that is not in the County's design standards and is therefore invalid in the unincorporated areas of the plan
- the third bullet under Stormwater Management is proposing permeable paving for roads which is not currently permitted by the County and is therefore invalid in the unincorporated areas of the plan
- p. 15 change all references from Lexington Avenue to Lexington Street
- delete "County" from the third (Plyers Mill Road) line in the Table; this is a Town street not operated by the County
- p. 19 the third bullet at the top of the page is proposing a median design that is not in the County's design standards and is therefore invalid in the unincorporated areas of the plan
- clarify in the "Goal" section the meaning of "continuous active pedestrian street" so that there is no confusion that it is a Business District Street open to vehicular travel
- p. 21 show all proposed streets
- p. 22 it sounds like the first bullet is suggesting the need for an enclosed storm drain system, in addition to stormwater management measures; this should be clarified. Also, the comment about permeable pavement should be stricken – at this time MCDOT is only allowing porous pavement on residential sidewalks
- p. 23 the first bullet under Silver Creek needs correction.
- the last sentence of the first paragraph under Metropolitan Avenue Area is incorrect and needs to be deleted.

- p. 24 the Konterra paragraph is misplaced within the Plan; it should be part of the Craft/Services District, not the Metropolitan Avenue Area, to be consistent with the mapping
- the first paragraph under Connecticut Avenue/University Boulevard Area is incorrect; for instance the mapping shows that the area is not "bounded" the University boulevard but rather "bisected" by it
- p. 25 Ken-Gar should be evaluated as a historic site or district as part of this plan, and a determination made as to whether to designate it or not
- p. 29 show all proposed streets
- p. 31 show all proposed streets
- p. 32 show all proposed streets
- p. 33 show all proposed streets
- "LB-5" is inconsistent with the table on p. 35
  - "SR-17" is inconsistent with the Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan, which shows it going via Dupont and Nash
  - "LB-2" should be continued easterly to "LB-6" and should only be shown on alignment A with no asterisk
  - "LB-4" should be continued westerly to "SR-54" via Calvert Place and Prospect Street
  - add a bikeway on Howard Avenue from Summit Avenue to Connecticut Avenue
- p. 34 an additional separate bridge for pedestrians and bicyclists is recommended over the CSX along the west side of Connecticut Avenue as part of Bikeway SR-17
- to what facility and/or road do the comments between SR-29 and SR-54 apply?
- p. 35 Table 2 is incomplete; bikeways LB-7 and LB-8 are shown on Map 14 but are missing from this Table
- an additional segment of "LB-1" is recommended from Knowles Avenue to Howard Avenue
  - "LB-5" is inconsistent with the figure on p. 34
  - Bikeway M-M' (as shown in the Kensington Wheaton Master Plan) is not shown on this plan draft; either show it on the map on p. 34 and add it to this table, or add some text formally deleting it so there is no future confusion as to its status
  - "LB-2" should extend to St. Paul Street rather than Connecticut Avenue
  - "LB-4" should extend to Summit Avenue rather than Kensington Parkway
  - add a bikeway on Howard Av. from Summit Av. to Connecticut Av.
  - the description for "LB-6" should include the connection under the CSX

- p. 36                    only show alignment A for B-3
- p. 37                    all of Arterial A-62 should have a R-O-W of 100' to be consistent with the previous plan
- Arterial A-67 should have 4 travel lanes to be consistent with the previous plan
  - additional right-of-way is recommended for MD 185 so it can accommodate Proposed Bikeways LB-1, LB-7 and SR-17
  - B-1 should have a R-O-W of 80' to be consistent with the previous plan
  - B-4 should only go to the Plan Boundary (not to Capitol View Ave) to be internally consistent
  - B-5 should be named Lexington Street (not Ave) extension; also the one travel lane is internally inconsistent with the on road bikeway
  - B-6 should have a R-O-W of 80' to be consistent with the previous plan
  - B-7 should have a R-O-W of 70'
  - B-8 should have a R-O-W of 80' to be consistent with the previous plan
  - B-9 should have a R-O-W of 80' to be consistent with the previous plan
  - B-10 should have a R-O-W of 70'
  - Primary Residential Street P-2 needs proper and accurate Limits
  - Primary Residential Street P-4 needs proper and accurate Limits
  - the second bullet under "Notes" should state Lexington Street (not Avenue) extension
  - the third bullet under "Notes" is inconsistent with the historic district boundary shown in the figure on p. 4
  - it would be helpful to document the existing right-of-way widths in table
  - the recommended design standards for the State roads should be deleted; County design standards do not apply on State roads
  - Recommended "as built" standards should reference the closest existing MCDOT design standard (most likely from our old book of standards)
  - The target speed for A-67 (Summit Ave between Cedar Lane & Knowles Ave) should be raised to 30 mph to match the current posted speed limit
  - On the business district streets, the document should indicate standard MC-214.02 (60' R/W with 2 travel lanes & 1 parking lane) or standard MC-214.03 (70' R/W with 2 travel lanes & 2 parking lanes) for existing roads. Std #MC-2005.01 is acceptable as recommended – since that applies to the proposed extension of Summit Ave.
  - The standards recommended for roads P-1 and P-4 do not exist in the old book of design standards nor in the CSRDS table; the #s should be corrected



DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS


Isiah Leggett  
County Executive

Richard Y. Nelson, Jr.  
Director

MEMORANDUM

July 18, 2011

TO: Diane Schwartz Jones, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer

FROM: Richard Y. Nelson, Jr., Director   
Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA)

SUBJECT: Public Hearing Draft of the Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan

The following are DHCA's comments on the Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan ("Sector Plan"):

DHCA supports the Sector Plan's proposals for additional housing units. DHCA notes that the Moderately Priced Housing Law (Chapter 25A) does not apply within the Town of Kensington, and that therefore any new residential development within the Town of Kensington will not be required to include MPDUs.

The recommendations of the Sector Plan appear to support the recommendations of the Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs, West Howard Avenue Urban Design Study completed with community participation in October 2009:

- a. Preserve the West Howard Antiques District and service industrial activities to enhance the area's look and function without compromising its eclectic nature.
- b. Improve storm water management.
- c. Introduction of sidewalks and other pedestrian amenities along West Howard Avenue.
- d. Evaluate potential for shared uses, including parking, should SHA's West Howard Avenue property redevelop.
- e. Reduce imperviousness
- f. Tree planting

DHCA recommends that the Sector Plan include a Housing section, similar to the current sections on Connectivity, Design, Environment and Diversity.

RYN:rmr

cc: Julie White

Office of the Director



MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE


Isiah Leggett  
County Executive

Richard R. Bowers  
Fire Chief

MEMORANDUM

July 25, 2011

TO: Diane Schwartz Jones, Assistant County Attorney  
County Attorney's Office

FROM: Richard R. Bowers, Fire Chief   
Department of Fire & Rescue Service

SUBJECT: Planning Board Draft Kensington & Vicinity Sector Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Planning Board Draft Kensington & Vicinity Sector Plan. My comments, much like they were in response to the earlier Public Hearing Draft, pertain to the plan's lack of recognition of fire-rescue needs and requirements. As with previous drafts, impacts of the plan's recommendations on fire department access, response time, and load-bearing requirements of roadways and access ways with relation to heavy fire-rescue apparatus have not been addressed in this latest version of the draft plan. In the attachment to this memorandum, I offer specific comments related to these concerns.

If you need further information or have questions, please contact me on 240-777-2435.

RRB/sg

Attachment

cc: Natalie Cantor, Director, Mid-County Regional Services Center  
Julie White, Office of the County Executive  
B/C Adam Jones, Fire Marshal's Office, MCFRS  
Scott Gutschick, Planning Section Manager, MCFRS

Office of the Fire Chief

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## SPECIFIC COMMENTS

### Pedestrian-oriented Urban Design

**Pages:** 1, 9, 11

**Excerpts:** "pedestrian friendly connections;" "encourage pedestrian-centered urban design;" "streets should be safe, pedestrian-oriented environments;" "narrower urban road sections;" "refrain from widening intersections..."

**Comment:** "Pedestrian-friendly" and similar phrases typically translate to reduced fire-rescue service access due to narrow streets, intersections with tight turning radii, and poor access to and around buildings. Narrow streets and tight turning radii delay emergency response, and poor access to and around buildings prevent or adversely impact the proper tactical positioning of fire-rescue vehicles during emergency incidents. Pedestrian-oriented design is achievable provided that fire-rescue access requirements are adequately addressed.

### Reduced Road Speed and Traffic Choke Points

**Page:** 9

**Excerpts:** "Reduce target speed of Connecticut Avenue to 30 mph;" "refrain from widening roadway intersections to accommodate through-traffic"

**Comment:** Connecticut Avenue is a major thoroughfare. Arbitrarily lowering the speed limit and restricting needed intersection improvements will create major choke points in Kensington significantly affecting response time of fire-rescue vehicles.

### Street Oriented Development

**Page:** 11

**Excerpt:** "Minimize conflicts with motorists, transit buses, and pedestrians through low target speeds for vehicles, access management, and reduced curb cuts."

**Comment:** These measures must be balanced with service needs of the community. Low target speeds increase emergency vehicle response time, while access management and reduced curb cuts, if not properly implemented, have the potential to reduce emergency services access to buildings and their occupants.

### Curb Cuts

**Page:** 11

**Excerpts:** "Reduced curb cuts;" "Minimize curb cuts to reduce conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles"

**Comment:** Sufficient and adequate vehicle access to and around buildings - made possible by curb cuts - must be provided and be as unrestricted as possible to allow access by fire-rescue vehicles. This is particularly important to the proper tactical positioning of large fire apparatus (i.e., pumpers and aerial units) around buildings to execute fire suppression operations and exterior rescues).

## SPECIFIC COMMENTS (CONT.)

### Road Widths

**Pages:** 9, 37

**Excerpts/References:** "narrower urban road sections;" "refrain from widening roadway intersections;" Master Plan of Highways Roadway Classifications table on page 37

**Comment:** The proposed recommendation concerning road width as proposed on page 9 (third and fourth bullets) will significantly slow response time of fire-rescue vehicles. The table on page 39 proposes cross sections and target speeds for public roadways in Kensington. MCFRS has not been given the opportunity to participate in any analysis of whether the proposed cross sections and target speeds will accommodate both traffic volume and timely emergency vehicle response.

### On-Street Parking

**Page:** 11

**Excerpt:** "encourage on-street parking"

**Comment:** In an effort to encourage on-street parking, the M-NCPPC in recent years has advocated for on-street parking counting toward required parking minimums. If on-street parking is necessary to achieve parking minimums, then there is no overflow parking available, thus creating opportunity for parking infractions that often lead to restricted emergency vehicle access.

### Street Trees

**Pages:** 11, 19, 26

**Excerpt:** "street trees"

**Comment:** Size, height, and spacing of street trees in the vicinity of buildings must allow adequate access for the tactical positioning of fire department ground ladders and aerial devices (e.g., aerial ladders, aerial platforms) to building windows. Poorly placed trees greatly restrict aerial apparatus (i.e., ladder trucks, tower ladders) operations at mid-rise and high-rise buildings. Tree location and density must be strategically planned to minimize these conflicts.

### Permeable Pavement

**Page:** 14

**Excerpt:** "Use, where feasible, permeable paving for roads, road shoulders, parking lots, and parking lanes."

**Comment:** Permeable surfaces are not conducive to supporting the high load-bearing requirements of heavy fire-rescue apparatus. Any road or parking surface that could be used by fire-rescue vehicles for travel or positioning must be of sufficient load-bearing capacity to support fire-rescue vehicles weighing up to 85,000 pounds. Any permeable surfaces that might be permitted must be on a structural sub-grade to support heavy vehicles such as fire-rescue vehicles.

## SPECIFIC COMMENTS (CONT.)

### Urban Design Guidelines

**Page:** 26

**Excerpt:** "The Planning Board must adopt urban design guidelines to help implement this Plan."

**Comment:** Input and review of the design guidelines by impacted departments/agencies such as the Fire-Rescue Service is imperative for cohesive implementation.

### Historic Designation for Fire Station

**Page:** 12

**Excerpt:** "Evaluate the following individual sites for potential historic designation: Kensington Fire Station, 10620 Connecticut Avenue"

**Comment:** Should this fire station be given historic designation, that could adversely impact any future renovations of the station to be pursued by the Kensington Volunteer Fire Department and/or the County. Any future renovations, potentially including an expansion, could be needed in the future to accommodate additional fire-rescue apparatus, equipment, and personnel related to increased service needs in the Kensington-Wheaton area.

**DEP Comments on  
Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan  
October 2009 Planning Board Draft**

Many of these comments were included in DEP's comments on the July 2009 Public Hearing Draft of the Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan.

1. General: The sector plan still does not discuss in any manner the water and sewer systems providing service for the sector plan area, or include any related discussion concerning the Water and Sewer Plan and its designation of community (public) service for the sector plan area. The plan should indicate whether proposed redevelopment will require replacement of water and/or sewer infrastructure in or around the plan area.
2. Page 14, bullets under Environment Paragraph: The document states that "A high priority should be placed on the following goals:
  - reducing the amount of impervious surfaces
  - treating stormwater runoff with environmentally sensitive design (ESD) or low impact development (LID)"

There is nothing specific in the plan that emphasizes reducing impervious surfaces. It appears to be the same high density/high impervious land use plan that has been used in the past for other Central Business District areas. There are no additional green space requirements and no options to allow for greater building heights (but maintaining the same FAR) in exchange for green space.

Treating stormwater runoff with ESD or LID is more than a priority; it is now a regulatory mandate under the state's new stormwater management regulations. The document should acknowledge this.

3. Page 14, bullets under Stormwater Management: Kensington residents already pay the Water Quality Protection Charge (WQPC). If projects in Kensington are to be funded out of the Water Quality Protection Fund (WQPF), they would be prioritized along with other needs Countywide and implemented based on the priority list.

This section refers to incorporating "open section roadway swales rather than conventional curbs" and designing sidewalks that "disconnect runoff from conventional storm drain systems." Neither of these is shown in the typical design standards for streets.

This section also encourages the use of the CR Zone to provide incentives for a variety of landscaping options for stormwater management. As noted previously, many of the techniques described are now required as part of the state's new stormwater regulations, so incentives should not be awarded for implementing them.

DEP has a program to undertake roadway Low Impact Development (LID) projects that would be funded by the WQPF. The currently identified projects are not within the Kensington Sector Plan area. As DEP moves forward with a systematic implementation of roadway LID, County roadways within Kensington will be prioritized along with other County roads. Roadway LID projects in Kensington could be undertaken through other funding sources.

4. Page 15, last bullet under Environmental Sustainability: The statement should be expanded to include specific goals for tree canopy. Suggest rewording the bullet to read "Increase tree canopy cover along streets and within medians, within existing neighborhoods, commercial areas, and on parkland to

*meet or exceed the American Forests recommendations for canopy coverage.*" These recommendations can be found at [www.americanforests.org/resources/urbanforests/treedeficit.php](http://www.americanforests.org/resources/urbanforests/treedeficit.php), and were included in 2009 Climate Protection Plan for Montgomery County (<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/dep/Sustainability/2009mococlimprotplan.pdf>, page 77).

5. Page 24, 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet under Silver Creek: Removal of the concrete channel in Silver Creek would be an extremely low priority for DEP's stream restoration program because of downstream fish barriers, higher priority given to restoration of natural channels and extremely high cost.

**White, Julie**

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**From:** Holyfield-Jewett, Regina on behalf of Hamilton, Parker  
**Sent:** Friday, April 15, 2011 3:02 PM  
**To:** Jones, Diane (CEX)  
**Cc:** White, Julie; Gale, Rita  
**Subject:** Comments on Public Hearing Draft Kensington Sector Plan

Diane:

The April 2011 Planning Board public hearing draft document mentions libraries in two areas – Open Space System on page 13 and Libraries on page 29.

The Open Space System comments indicate that unused green space behind the library parking should be contemplated for public space and stormwater expansion but should take into consideration any future library expansion plans. If the Sector plan is suggesting that green space and stormwater expansion for the Town of Kensington be considered for the library lot, the Department would have concerns about multi jurisdictional use of the property, which I am sure DEP and Parks might also echo. We would also be concerned about use of the green space for a park unless Parks made provision for restroom facilities on the the park site; we do not have capacity to add park traffic and restroom use at the Kensington Park Library.

If the comments relate to stormwater management and open space for the library's use, the Planning Board should change the text to indicate that DEP is ready to implement, in May 2011, a project that will locate Low Impact Design (LID) stormwater management practices on the unused green spaces of the library's parking lot including 2 rain gardens, 2 rain gardens/infiltration trenches, 2 tree boxes, and street tree plantings. So the intent of the Sector plan is already being implemented on the library's property.

The Library section on page 29 includes information on both the Kensington Park and Noyes Libraries and mentions the impact on future renovation plans for Kensington Park of the White Flint sector plan. The Library Department will definitely consider the White Flint Sector Plan when outlining building and service changes for the Kensington Library renovation, as we see that library being one of four libraries within a 3-5 mile radius of White Flint that will be impacted and used by White Flint residents.

The plans for the repurposing of the Noyes Library, which are currently being investigated, may change the focus and purpose of the one room historic structure and thus might impact parking for that facility. If the Library Department changes the mission of the Noyes Library, the need for some additional parking spaces may arise. Approximately 10 cars can now park around the triangle where the library is located. The need for daytime and possible evening visitor parking around the library and on nearby streets must continue to be considered as the street grid for the historic section of Kensington (where the Noyes Library is located) is discussed and implemented in the sector plan.

The plan also calls for the extension of Summit Avenue from Plyers Mill Road to Connecticut Avenue (page 23 of the draft plan and page 39 of the Appendix). The Department has concerns about implementation of this recommendation due to the current traffic patterns that result in cars that cut through the Kensington Park Library's parking lot to avoid the intersection/ traffic backups at Summit and Knowles as well as at Connecticut and Plyers Mill (other end of Summit). The Department is concerned that use of the library's parking lot as a shortcut could worsen if Summit Ave is extended.

Finally, the library's property fronting Knowles Avenue lacks a sidewalk along the north side of the street between the driveway and the next property to the east. There is a sidewalk on the hilly portion of the actual library property which runs the length of the building and drops down again to Knowles at the far eastern end, but we have been asked to provide a sidewalk on the street itself in light of ADA and other access concerns. Having this included in the Sector Plan would help in the budgeting for it by the County.

Thanks.

Rita

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Rita W. Gale for B. Parker Hamilton, Director  
Public Services Administrator  
Montgomery County Public Libraries  
21 Maryland Avenue, Suite 310  
Rockville, Maryland 20850  
240-777-0022, fax: 240-777-0008

(85)

**Marin, Sandra**

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**From:** Ervin's Office, Councilmember  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 14, 2011 2:09 PM  
**To:** Montgomery County Council  
**Subject:** FW:



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9.pdf (2 MB)

-----Original Message-----

**From:** White, Julie  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 14, 2011 2:04 PM  
**To:** Ervin's Office, Councilmember; Healy, Sonya; Floreen's Office, Councilmember; 'francoise.carrier@mncppc-mc.org';  
Dise, David E.  
**Cc:** Jones, Diane (CEX)  
**Subject:**

Dear All: Please see the attached memo that was just hand carried to the County Council to Valerie Ervin regarding the Revised Planning Board Draft Kensington and Vicinity Sector Plan.

Thank you,  
Julie White for Diane Schwartz Jones  
Offices of the County Executive  
240-777-2532

RECEIVED  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
COUNCIL

2011 SEP 14 PM 2:16

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